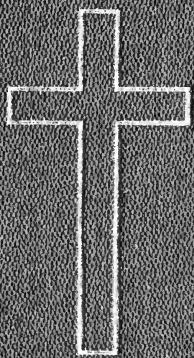


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BY THE

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

Sometime Rector of St. Mark's, Philadelphia

With an Introduction by
The Right Rev. The
Bishop of Springfield

Eighteenth Impression

VOL. II. REGIS
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NEW YORK, TORONTO

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1924

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TO MY FATHER IN GOD

The Right Reverend
HORATIO POTTER, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L., &c.
BISHOP OF NEW YORK

**By his kind permission, and with sincere filial respect and affection,
I dedicate this work**

P R E F A C E.

FOR the unavoidable delay in the issue of this Volume I desire to express my sincere regret. I had hoped that it would have been ready for use for the Trinity season of last year; pressure of other work, however, rendered this impossible.

As to the plan of the work,—I have provided a Sketch for every day in the year following the Church's seasons, besides adding one for every Saint's Day, and a course on the Beatitudes. At least one Meditation, and generally more, will be found on the Epistle or Gospel for the week, and, to give the book some sort of completeness, Meditations have been inserted on all our LORD's Miracles and Parables, and on the chief events of His life. This has given, especially in this Volume, a great preponderance to subjects from the Gospels.

In addition to a table of contents, I have now drawn up a classified index of subjects treated in both Volumes, arranging them in courses, so that they may be used as series of Meditations or Sermons. Very many of these have been actually so used by myself; for instance, those on the Parable of the Pearl were from notes of a Retreat I gave at Boston in 1879 to Associates of the Sisterhood of S. Margaret; those on the Epistles to the Seven Churches from a Retreat at S. Gabriel's, Peekskill, in 1880, to Associates of the Sisterhood of S. Mary; while those on S. John Baptist were used for a Retreat for priests in New York, in 1882. Of course they only contain the outline of the thoughts developed in these Retreats, but to make them useful to others on similar occasions, an Introductory Meditation has been added (page 200), which may be used with any of them.

There is also at the end of each Volume an index of texts, for convenience of reference, the Psalms being quoted from the Prayer Book version as the more familiar.

The criticisms of Volume I. which have appeared in various Church papers, both in England and America, have all been very favourable, far more so than I could have expected, and those of the principal papers are appended to this Volume. As will be seen, the only exception taken is by a reviewer in the *Church Times*, to the wording of one sentence on page 92: "The one business of life is to save your soul, and, if this be neglected, all else is but idleness." The remainder of that Meditation clearly shows that the words were not used in the sense he assumes; however, as they certainly will bear that

construction if taken apart from the context, I heartily thank him for pointing out the looseness of expression, and when that Volume reaches its third edition, as it promises before long to do, I shall take the opportunity to alter the wording of that sentence.

The sources from which I have drawn my material have been so diverse that it would be quite hopeless for me to attempt to enumerate them. Many of the Meditations are from notes of addresses given by me at different times, extending over some twelve years, and very often the sources from which they were obtained have long since been forgotten. In some instances, when I have supposed an idea was my own I have afterwards found it in a book which I had certainly never read before, and so I will only venture to say that I am not conscious of intentional plagiarism, and that I have often rejected thoughts which I was able to trace to the oral teachings of others. I have read most of the principal commentaries, both general and on particular Books of the Bible, and have sometimes drawn Meditations directly from such reading, but the only book I have used at all systematically in this way has been Archbishop Trench's Notes on the Parables and Miracles. I desire to record my great obligation to this work, which, I think, no one treating of the same subjects could venture to ignore; and I have in some places used the same words as the Archbishop, feeling it more honest to do so, than by altering the form of expression to disguise the origin of the thought.

In finishing my task I can only repeat what I said in the Preface to Volume I., that I submit all I have written unreservedly to the Church, and that if through ignorance or inadvertence anything should be found contrary to her teachings, I withdraw it.

ALFRED G. MORTIMER.

S. MARY'S RECTORY,
WEST NEW BRIGHTON, S. I., NEW YORK.
Easter, 1883.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE HOLY TRINITY.

"They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."—Rev., iv., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the hosts of heaven singing the Ter-Sanctus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so pass through your probation here, that you may have your place with them hereafter, and join in the praises of GOD for ever.

I. Consider the three Epochs in the heavenly song in their relation to us:

i. *"Which was."* The eternity before the Creation, when GOD alone existed, when there was neither earth nor heaven; then I had my home in the bosom of GOD, quickening the thrills of His love, for He foreknew and predestinated me from all eternity.

ii. *"And is."* The present, between two eternities, and I myself the object of GOD's love, and care, the Will of GOD concerned for me every moment.

iii. *"And is to come."* The eternal future of my immortality; beholding the Beatific Vision, and drinking in my own immortal life as I gaze into GOD—so that there has never been a moment in which there has not existed the most intimate relationship between the Holy Trinity and my own individual self.

II. Consider the relation of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity to us in prayer—the most common act of spiritual life:

i. Our prayers are addressed to GOD the Father Almighty, a Father's love assuring us of His Will to help; His Omnipotence telling of His power.

ii. Each prayer derives its efficacy from the mediation of JESUS CHRIST, His only Son our LORD; He, as it were, taking our feeble prayers upon His lips, and uttering them with divine power before the throne of grace.

iii. GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Spirit of prayer, in our hearts teaches us to pray (Rom., viii., 26); so that in so elementary an action as prayer we bring into relation with us each Person of the Holy Trinity.

III. Consider the relation of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity to us in every good action of our lives:

i. It must be done in accordance with the Father's Will; "Thy Will be done" is the true law of Christian action.

ii. It must be done in the Name, and for the glory of JESUS CHRIST (Col., iii., 17).

iii. It must be done through the aid of the HOLY GHOST.

So we see that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, instead of being an impractical dogma of theology (as some would say), invented rather to puzzle than to help us, is indeed of most practical and comforting import, closely related to our every-day existence, touching upon every prayer, and every good act of our life.

Affections.—Make an act of faith in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; pray that you may do GOD's Will more perfectly; resolve in your next work to do it for the glory of our LORD.

MONDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

NICODEMUS.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God."—S. John, iii., 1-2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich and powerful ruler timidly speaking to our LORD by night.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for boldness to confess CHRIST before men.

I. Consider:

i. A rich man in a position of considerable worldly importance, a prominent member of the Sanhedrim, the representative of the ancient religion in which was bound up the political hopes of the nation; and his conscience has told him that CHRIST is a Teacher come from GOD.

ii. This new teaching is unpatriotic, impolitic, unpopular; its followers are only the poor and unlearned; those who are looked upon by his sect with contempt, as its characteristic doctrine requires not mere asceticism, but self-sacrifice.

iii. The struggle with his Conscience. He cannot ignore it, and yet to accept it will involve his position before men. He tries to compromise by coming to JESUS secretly, hoping that for a man in his position some allowance may be made, by which he may be able to retain his position, and yet have the benefit of this new teaching.

II. He comes to our LORD. Consider:

i. He begins to patronize our LORD—“*We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God*”—and this attitude is marked throughout. How does our LORD receive this? He wants not his patronage, but his soul; and so instead of adapting His teaching to his prejudices He begins by the dogmatic statement, You cannot be saved without Baptism (vv. 3-5). When Nicodemus hesitates and asks, How? Instead of explaining, our LORD repeats it even more forcibly (as on a similar occasion with regard to the Holy Eucharist, S. John, vi., 52), and instead of defining the method, illustrates how far above human definition it is, *i. e.*, by the working of the HOLY GHOST (v. 8).

ii. He asks again, How? Our LORD does not tell how, but goes on to state the leading truths of Christianity—the Incarnation (v. 13); the Atonement (v. 14); and the personal claims of CHRIST, as the source of light, truth, and love.

III. Consider the result on Nicodemus:

i. In his heart he believes, but cowardice arising from a desire to keep his worldly position holds him back, and he lives a double life, the grace of GOD striving with him.

ii. When JESUS is being judged (S. John, vii., 50) he tries to salve his conscience by a feeble attempt to protect Him, not on the ground of belief in Him, but on the ordinary plea of fair play. The others know his weakness, attack him, and silence him.

iii. He comes to the tomb of JESUS, but not until another of his own order, Joseph, has come boldly forth. We see here the attraction of the Cross, the law of the power of self-sacrifice: the Preacher's death has effected what His life did not accomplish.

IV. Consider how many in his position act like Nicodemus in every time of religious revival:

i. They come secretly to patronize, and expect a sort of compromise for themselves. They object especially to definite dogmatic statements.

ii. Before the world they make a feeble remonstrance for fair play for men whom in their hearts they believe to be in the right.

iii. Our LORD shews us how to deal with these men; not by watering down the truth to their cowardice, but by telling them plainly that there is only one way for rich and poor, the way of CHRIST'S Church.

Affections.—Realize that GOD does not want your patronage, but your soul; pray for light to know the Truth; and resolve never to compromise any truth that you believe.

TUESDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

BAPTISM.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."—S. John, iii, 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD with great solemnity speaking these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may value rightly, and use devoutly, every means of grace.

I. Consider that Baptism is the foundation and starting-point of Christian life :

i. Our LORD, replying rather to the thoughts than to the words of Nicodemus, promulgates this law, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God"*—v. 3.

ii. This inability to see God's Kingdom does not arise from an arbitrary condition imposed by GOD, but from the lack of capacity in the natural man; for the spiritual faculty by which man apprehends the things of GOD is the result of this Regeneration, and is as necessary, and as real, as the eyes by which he beholds the things of the world.

iii. Nicodemus recognized our LORD as a Teacher from GOD, and desired to learn from Him. But what man needed was not more learning, but more life; and this life, like the natural life, must have its birth. Regeneration is not so much being born again, as being born anew, or from above (*ἄνωθεν*), that is, into a new condition of life.

II. Consider what this Regeneration, or new-birth, is :

i. The being born into CHRIST, so that, by virtue of our membership in Him, we are made partakers of the privileges and faculties which belong to the Kingdom of GOD, Which is His Body.

ii. The gift of the HOLY GHOST, and so the introduction of a new cause, operating in a new sphere, and producing new results.

The fact of this Regeneration is accomplished by a definite act, Baptism (as shown by the Aorist *γεννηθῆ*, vv. 3, 4, 5, 7); the result which follows is a state which abides (*τὸ γεγεννημένον*, perfect—v. 6). The words flesh and spirit (v. 6) do not signify evil and good, but two spheres of existence with which man is connected—by the spirit with heaven, by the flesh with earth.

III. Consider further of this Regeneration :

i. The water referred to S. John's baptism, the Spirit to that inward power which S. John said should be the characteristic of CHRIST's Baptism. Our LORD shows that in His Baptism the two are inseparable—the birth of the Spirit is potentially united with the birth by water, and their inseparability is indicated by the very form of the expression (*ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος*)—one preposition governing both nouns, and so distinguished from the double phrase, “born of water and of Spirit.”

ii. *“To see.....to enter the Kingdom”*—vv. 3-5. One of the effects of this Regeneration is that we not only see, as intelligent spectators, the constitution and character of this Kingdom, but we become its citizens. The two are inseparable. It cannot be seen in its inner Spiritual glory but by those who have entered it.

iii. Nicodemus (like the Jews, chap. vi., 52) asks, How can these things be? Our LORD (as in that case) does not satisfy the curiosity, but most solemnly reaffirms the fact. We can see the effect, but not the cause; but by the effect you recognize the presence of the cause—e. g., *“The wind bloweth,” &c., v. 8.* So we cannot tell how these things are, but we know that they are.

Affections.—Make an act of faith in our LORD's teaching as to Holy Baptism; realize the privileges to which it has admitted you; and pray that you may fulfil the obligations attached to them.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE INCARNATION.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."—S. John, iii. 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD on the Right Hand of the Father in all the Glory of His Kingdom.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in the battle of life we may so overcome, that we may, according to His promise, reign with Him. (Rev., iii., 21.)

I. *"No man hath ascended up to heaven."* Consider:

i. The condition of man before the Incarnation; outside of GOD, and no more able by his natural powers to rise to GOD than with his feet to mount to heaven.

ii. Man was unable to ascend into the region of absolute and eternal truth because he had no faculty by which to gaze on GOD.

iii. Man was still created for heaven, and possessed of an intense craving for truth, and life, and love.

II. *"But He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man."* Consider:

i. The particle "but" (*ει μη*) does not imply that CHRIST has ascended into heaven as though He were one of a class, and contrasted with all the others; but simply that He in fact enjoyed that directness of knowledge by nature which another could only attain to by such an ascension.

ii. He came down out of heaven at the Incarnation, and became the Son of Man without ceasing to be what He was before, the Son of GOD; born of a human Mother, yet never separated from His Divine Father. There was a continuity of personality, but without any confusion of natures.

iii. It is impossible for man to have direct knowledge of GOD as GOD. He can come to know Him thus only through One, who shares both the human and divine natures, and who is in vital fellowship both with GOD and man. By the Incarnation this condition is satisfied, and the human soul of JESUS admitted to the intuitive vision of GOD, and to all the counsels of His wisdom.

III. *"Which is in heaven."* Consider:

i. That before His conception the Son of Man was not in heaven, but immediately after it, by virtue of the hypostatic union, He was in heaven.

ii. That after His Ascension too He is present in the Holy Eucharist without interference with His Presence at the Right Hand of God. Any attempt to explain the fact of CHRIST's local bodily presence in heaven at the same time that He is really corporally present on earth must necessarily fail, from want of knowledge respecting the properties of His Spiritual Body.

iii. That by virtue of our sacramental incorporation with Him we are made partakers of the benefits of the Incarnation—the crowning blessing of which is the Beatific Vision—to see in Him all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily—to know even as we are known, to reign with Him for ever.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the benefits of the Incarnation; realize your share in those blessings, and make an act of faith in their application to you through the Sacraments; pray that you may grow in Sacramental union with CHRIST.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

EUCARISTIC ADORATION.

"And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."—Rev., iv., 9-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the company of heaven falling down in adoration before the King on His throne.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace rightly to adore our **LORD JESUS CHRIST** present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

S. John in his vision saw the worship of heaven, the pattern of the Eucharistic worship of the Church.

I. Consider:

- i. There was the throne, in the midst of which "*stood a Lamb as it had been slain*" (Rev., v., 6), the Altar and the Victim.
- ii. "*Seven golden candlesticks*" (Rev., i., 12)—the Altar Cross with its three lights on each side; "*Crux est mea Lux.*"
- iii. "*In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man clothed with a garment,*" &c. (Rev., i., 13);—showing that in each Eucharist our **LORD** is the Priest as well as the Victim.

II. Consider further:

- i. "*The door set open*" (Rev., iv., 1). The Eucharist is the door through which we may gaze into heaven; Jacob said of its type, "*This is the Gate of Heaven*" (Gen., xxviii., 17).
- ii. "*Come up hither*" (Rev., iv., 1). This is the Eucharistic Invitation, for the Eucharist is the means by which we mount to the contemplation of heavenly things.
- iii. By our Communions we are not so much taken up into heaven as heaven is taken into us, and we become external to these glories, and then indeed the Kingdom of God is within us. (S. Luke, xvii., 21.)

III. Consider the lesson of Eucharistic Adoration:

- i. By our Communion we are made one with the whole Body of **CHRIST**, and "*therefore with angels and archangels,*" &c.
- ii. The elders fall before the throne in adoring worship, and we, while the Lamb is on the Altar, sing, in the Gloria in Excelsis, "*We worship Thee,*" &c.
- iii. When we contemplate the reverent worship of heaven, described by S. John, and then examine our own attitude of soul during the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, do we not feel the need to pray for more of the Spirit of Worship, and to strive to make our acts of adoration a little more like the heavenly pattern?

Affections.—Realize at the Holy Eucharist the Presence of our **LORD**, attended by the whole company of Heaven; pray for the Spirit of Holy Fear; resolve to be more careful about your acts of adoration.

FRIDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”—S. John, iii., 14-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the dying Israelite gazing with faith upon the uplifted serpent, and finding himself healed.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may ever seek strength and healing in the Passion of CHRIST.

I. Consider the circumstances under which the text was spoken:

i. Our Blessed LORD had announced to Nicodemus the law of the necessity of Baptism; but the graces of Baptism flow, on the one hand from the Incarnation, in that it makes us Members of Christ; and on the other hand from the Passion, in that it is the remission of sin; He therefore first teaches (v. 13) the Incarnation, and now proceeds to the Passion, or Atonement.

ii. Nicodemus is a teacher of the law, expecting a victorious and glorious Messiah, not a suffering and dying CHRIST; therefore to teach the Passion would be to arouse all the prejudices of his education, and of his hopes.

iii. Our LORD with loving wisdom therefore chooses from the law a type, which in its very use seemed to contradict the distinct letter of the law, for the use of an image was prohibited by the Second Commandment, and much more the image of the serpent, which had been cursed; now our LORD explains, what was to the Jews an unsolved difficulty, by showing that this apparent anomaly was ordered as a type of His Passion.

II. Consider the meaning of the type:

i. The serpent represents the devil, because when the serpent bites, its poison pervades the frame of the victim, that frame becomes poisoned, and death ensues; so sin, the poison of the devil, being instilled into our nature, it becomes a poisoned nature, a flesh of sin.

ii. The brazen serpent was made in the *likeness* of the serpents that had bitten the Israelites, but in it there was no poison, only the *likeness* of it; so our LORD was made “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” (Rom., viii., 3), “*yet without sin.*” (Heb., iv., 15.)

iii. The Brazen Serpent lifted up as a trophy signified to the Israelites that for the poison there was a remedy, that the plague had been overcome; so our LORD transferred to His Body, not sin, but death, the penalty of sin without its guilt; and on His Cross made an open show of, and triumph over the Enemy, so that it was as if the Enemy himself had been nailed to the Cross, for Sin, and Death, and Satan were crucified, when He was crucified.

III. Consider some of the lessons we are here taught:

i. The fiery serpents symbolize to us the mortal sins by which we are poisoned, and which without a remedy must cause eternal death.

ii. The Passion tells of the remedy, the Atonement, by which GOD and Man are made as one, sin forgiven, and strength for fresh struggle bestowed.

iii. The lifting up of the serpent teaches that CHRIST’s humiliation on the Cross was really His Exaltation (Phil., ii., 8-9,) and shows us that humiliations rightly borne always lead to exaltation, *i. e.* “*Crux scala cœli.*”

Affections—Thanksgiving for the benefits of the death of CHRIST; pray that you may at once look to the Cross for healing, when wounded by sin; resolve to accept humiliations cheerfully, recognizing their true result.

SATURDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE SISTER'S ERRAND.

"And when she had so said, she went her way and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee."—S. John, xi., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Martha bringing the message with joy to her sister.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may rejoice to alleviate sorrow, and really sympathize with others.

A joyous message this to sorrowful Mary, as she sat weeping in the house.

I. Consider the individuality of God's calls :

i. A time in the life of each of our LORD's Apostles and followers when this message came ; and so in the life of every one, made God's in Baptism, there is a time when the Master calls.

ii. *"And calleth for thee."* The individuality of our LORD's call is a result of the individuality of His love. We feel it when, instead of being satisfied with serving Him in a general way in the congregation, we crave and experience that individual love, hear His call, and rise to follow.

II. Consider when God's calls come :

i. Often in the hour of sorrow, when we mourn one we have loved and lost, like Mary, weeping over this life of change, where all earthly joys seem to die, and amid our tears the message comes, a voice speaks in our souls, *"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."* A new love is offered, and one that cannot change, absorbing all else, and giving satisfaction through time and eternity.

ii. In the day of distress, perplexity, or strong temptation, when all seems dark, and we are ready to sink down in despair, the Master comes, and calls, and a path opens before our feet—a path, it may be, of toil, but leading to everlasting rest.

iii. Sometimes even in the time of sin, when we have light to see our misery, and a yearning for something better, the Master comes and calls.

III. Consider :

i. Mary had expected JESUS to save her brother, and now He comes and calls, not for her brother, but for herself. So, sometimes, when all our thoughts are for those we love, the prayer returns into our own bosom, the blessing descends on our own head.

ii. Martha bears the message—blessed privilege ! It cannot be till the Master has come to her ; but then she goes to work for Him to call her sister to Him also. Oh ! the joy of whispering this dear message to some sorrow-stricken, or sin-laden soul—to tell of the sweet experience of His love, and then to add, *"and calleth for thee."*

iii. The contrast between the love of man and the love of GOD. The one we want to keep only for ourselves, the other we long to share with others.

Affections.—Make an act of thanksgiving for our LORD's individual love for you ; pray that He will use you to lead others to Him ; resolve to pray for some one you know to be in sorrow.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS, I.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores."—S. Luke, xvi., 19-20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich man passing the beggar at his gate.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize the responsibilities of life.

This parable may be regarded as a drama of surpassing interest, divided into three scenes. Its key-note is the contrast between two lives, and in each scene the contrast is strikingly preserved.

Scene I. Two men living in the world, just as we may see to-day :

i. The one the world has smiled on—he is rich, popular, one of the world's great men, a religious man, too, as his address, Father Abraham, shows; he lived as rich men lived, clothed in fine dress, and faring sumptuously. Nothing very wrong in this, for he lived according to his station.

ii. At his door lay a poor beggar, Lazarus. Nothing uncommon for a beggar to be at a rich man's door, nothing uncommon for him to be despised and neglected; this poor man was in extremest need, poverty's victim, and probably from his poverty sick with loathsome disease; lying there in the heat of the eastern sun, thinking perhaps, as he gazed on the rich man's plenty, of that strange problem, GOD's providence; his name, Lazarus (God is my Helper), signifies his trust in GOD, and sorely it was tried; the weary days succeeded each other, but none took pity on him—none but the dogs, who licked his sores. What a picture of extremest distress! Could any contrast be greater?

Scene II. That which occurs in the life of all—the death of these two men, and then comes their funeral :

i. The rich man's death-bed, with every comfort and alleviation; then the grand funeral, the crowds of friends, the hired mourners, the procession through the streets, the burning of spices, the grand tomb, the funeral oration, and then the epitaph relating the virtues of the deceased, the synagogue he built, &c.

ii. Another death-bed, another funeral, mean and poor, just what the law required, but no more; and the body of Lazarus was laid in the earth, while angels carried his soul to Abraham's bosom. This scene, too, we may gaze on every day, and if this were all, the drama would be tame, a striking contrast, but only what we see every day.

Scene III. Our LORD lifts the curtain, and allows us for a moment to gaze into the great unseen world, and then the contrast continues, as striking, nay, more so, and we see a double contrast, between the two men, and also between their respective lives here and hereafter :

i. The rich man in torments, not there by the mere arbitrary judgment of God, but by the working out of the unchangeable law of his own life; he realizes now the responsibility of life. Oh, it is a solemn thing! Consider the contrast to his former life :

(a) Torment of sight : he had feasted his eyes on forms of art and beauty, now he sees Lazarus what he might have been; Lazarus had his torment of sight in the world, when he gazed on the rich man's plenty, and yet starved.

(b) Torment of taste : he who had fared sumptuously every day now longs in vain for a drop of cold water, which he had perhaps denied to Lazarus; Lazarus had his torment of taste in the world, when he hungered, and in the rough food he had to eat.

(c) Torment of memory : the worst of all, "*Son, remember*," ah, too well! All the sins of his past life, all its neglected opportunities, and especially Lazarus, how he had passed him day by day; met his look of entreaty, heard his voice, GOD's voice, calling him to a duty, which he still neglected. It was my own fau't, I had a daily call, and heeded not.

ii. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom : so restful, in peace; he too sees now the true end of GOD's providence, GOD's wisdom and love in his former life of suffering; he does not seem to see the rich man, for it is Abraham who speaks, it is the last scene, the final contrast, and the condition of both is fixed for eternity.

Affections.—Make an act of faith in GOD's loving Providence; pray that you may never neglect GOD's call; resolve often to remind yourself of the responsibility of life.

MONDAY AFTER FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS, II.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house : for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—S. Luke, xvi., 27-31.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich man entreating Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brethren.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always use the light given you by GOD.

I. Consider the Rich Man's excuses:

i. The request to send Lazarus to his brethren to warn them was a covert accusation of GOD, that He was unjust in not giving him sufficient warning; his motive was not love for his brethren, but a desire to justify himself, really an excuse, that it was not his fault that he had come to this place of torment, but GOD's, for not giving him a warning strong enough to compel obedience.

ii. *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."* GOD has abundantly warned you, what can be plainer than His accredited revelation;—He was a Pharisee, probably, knew what Isaiah had said about hell; the address, Father, shows that he was a Jew, one who prided himself on his religion, revered the prophets, but did not act on what he professed to believe.

iii. *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."* A special supernatural manifestation, he argues, would convince them, and would have saved him; Abraham tells him that those who will not act on the accredited revelation of GOD, will not act on special supernatural manifestations;—his brethren, the Jews, were tried. One did rise from the dead, our LORD Himself, and they tried by fraud to conceal the fact of His Resurrection; they were not converted by it.

II. Consider how men often act like this now:

i. They complain of GOD, that His revelation is not sufficiently full to compel obedience; but is it not generally an excuse to justify their own neglect, or violation of what is revealed?

ii. Sufficient has been revealed to guide millions through this dark world to the Everlasting Light;—you have as much as the Saints had, you profess perhaps to believe it, but you do not act even on what you say you believe. Those who do not use the light they have, and which they recognize, would not use more, if it were given them.

iii. If you had miracles and supernatural phenomena you would explain them away as the result of a diseased imagination;—GOD has given enough for the faculty of Faith to grasp;—miracles would not help faith, and without faith no amount of evidence would produce moral conviction. This is proved by the fact that those who ask for more convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity, are those who reject or explain away the miraculous part of the evidence which they have. Our LORD here prophesies that His Resurrection will not convert those whom His teaching has not touched.

Affections.—Realize that absolute knowledge hinders the exercise of faith; and that to those only who act on the light they have, is more given; pray that you may never deceive yourself with false excuses; examine how far you are heeding GOD's warnings.

TUESDAY AFTER FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

MEMORY.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember."—S. Luke, xvi., 25.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich man in hell, meditating on the words of Abraham—“Son, remember.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may ever keep your memory unwounded by sin.

I. Consider what Memory is :

i. Memory is that mysterious power of the soul which constitutes man's individuality, which preserves the continuity of a life, which makes the old man and child one. Without it, a thousand different lives might be lived in us. It is that power which spans both space and time, making the past present.

ii. It is the treasure-house of the soul, where is stored up all the rich experiences of life, supplying the intellect with material from which to draw the conclusions upon which the actions of life are based.

II. Consider the effect of sin in wounding the Memory :

i. A wounded memory, pleasure in past sin, one of the greatest temptations, and scarcely ever quite overcome. Experience, which ought to be our great safeguard, when it is sinful experience, becomes our great danger.

ii. The care and watchfulness required when once the memory has been wounded by sin. As a person with hemorrhage of the lungs, brought on perhaps by a neglected cold, has to take such care as almost to make life a burden, and then, from some little carelessness, a relapse takes place, and the work of healing has all to be begun again, so is it with a wounded memory. We need indeed to pray, “LORD, cleanse my memory.”

III. Consider the office of the Memory in the life to come :

i. It will be one of the joys of heaven to have a treasure of sweet recollections of our life on earth; to recall the struggles of this life, which ended in such victories; the sorrows which were turned into such joy. The memory then will be cleansed from all recollection of sin: by what means we know not, but perhaps by that purifying fire of which S. Paul speaks (I. Cor., iii., 13), through which all must pass at the last, and which shall try every man's work, and burn up all but the gold of God's Kingdom.

ii. It will be the principal torment of the lost—to recollect all the opportunities, graces, calls neglected, all the sins wilfully chosen in spite of repeated warnings as to their results. Abraham said to the rich man, “Son, remember.” The recollection of the past life will be the most intense torment, the self-reproach—it was all my own fault; I remember, I was warned.

Affections.—Realize the delicacy of the faculty of Memory, and the importance of keeping it undefiled; pray that it may be cleansed now in the Precious Blood; resolve to watch against those trains of thought which may re-open old wounds in the memory.

WEDNESDAY AFTER FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE OFFICE OF CONSCIENCE.

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."—Isaiah, xxx., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the soul in darkness and doubt waiting for the light which shows the way.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a habit of prompt obedience to the Voice of Conscience.

I. Consider what Conscience is:

i. It is that faculty through which the Voice of God speaks to the soul; so delicate, it is like a watch, which, if trifled with, begins to tell the wrong time, and finally stops altogether.

ii. It is that power of the soul which is given to guide the will. In the inmost chamber of the soul's life a continual Assize is being held; the Will is the Judge, Conscience takes the place of the jury, the memory recalls past facts as precedents, the intellect supplies arguments, the lower nature with its passions and desires pleads too. It is the office of the Conscience to pronounce a verdict of right or wrong on each question which comes before it; it is the office of the Will to give effect to the Verdict of Conscience.

II. Consider that Conscience is educated by the actions of life into one of three states:

i. Enlightened by the HOLY GHOST, strengthened by the exercises of religion, and habitually and promptly obeyed, it speaks in all things the Will of GOD.

ii. If argued with and forced, it becomes but an echo of our own will.

iii. If this be persevered in the Conscience is stifled, and at last becomes dumb.

III. Consider the relation of Conscience to the other chief powers of the soul:

i. It is the Guide of the Will; a strong will which, if guided by a Conscience trained to hear God's Voice, would have made a grand character, for want of this guidance produces often a thoroughly wicked and dangerous man.

ii. It is the Light of the Understanding: A mighty intellect unenlightened by Conscience leads its possessor only into the darkness and misery of unbelief.

iii. It is the Guard of the Memory: A powerful memory unrestrained by the voice of Conscience revels in sinful recollections, which defile and ruin the whole soul.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the gift of Conscience; pray that you may be faithful in training this great power; resolve to be very careful in the examination of Conscience.

THURSDAY AFTER FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE REAL PRESENCE.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; This is My Body."—S. Matt., xxvi., 26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD on the last night of His life solemnly instituting the Holy Eucharist.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may rightly venerate those Holy Mysteries.

I. Consider what the Holy Eucharist is :

i. It is the Body and Blood of CHRIST present under the forms of Bread and Wine. The outward elements do not cease to be what they were before consecration, but they become what they were not before; even as in the beginning, *"the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (Gen. ii., 7); *i. e.* without ceasing to be what he was before, a material body.

ii. It is the same Body of CHRIST, that was born of the Virgin Mary, and that was nailed to the Cross; for CHRIST has but one Body; but it is now under different conditions, a glorified Body, impassible, bright, agile, subtle. The same Body as that which sits on the Right Hand of GOD.

iii. As each of the natures of CHRIST was real, for He was truly human and yet truly divine, so both the outward and inward parts of the Holy Eucharist are real; but while the human and divine natures were indissolubly joined in the hypostatic union, the outward and inward parts are only temporarily united in the Holy Eucharist, so that, when after digestion or from corruption the bread ceases to be bread, the Body of CHRIST ceases to be united to it.

II. Consider the means by which this is accomplished :

i. The elements are consecrated by a Priest using the same words, and doing the same acts as our LORD JESUS CHRIST did; and as He at the first Eucharist was the Priest consecrating His own Body and Blood, so now in every Eucharist He is the true Priest as well as the Victim.

ii. The efficient cause is the operation of the HOLY GHOST; as in the Incarnation the HOLY GHOST overshadowed the B. V. Mary, and of her flesh formed the Body of CHRIST; as in Baptism the HOLY GHOST incorporates us into the Body of CHRIST; so by His descent upon the elements He makes them to become, what our LORD says they are, the Body and Blood of CHRIST.

iii. The Body of CHRIST is naturally and locally only in heaven; it is supernaturally and sacramentally present upon the Altars of the Church, but none the less really.

III. Consider why we believe this :

i. Because our LORD at the Institution of the Eucharist said *"This is My Body;"* and in His great discourse in the Synagogue of Capernaum (S. John, vi.,) asserted it many times.

ii. Because, when the Jews *"strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?"* (S. John, vi., 52), our LORD while He did not tell them how, said with great solemnity, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you"* (v. 53). And when *"many of His disciples went back,"* because they could not believe this, our LORD did not call them back, and tell them they had misunderstood Him, but let them depart, saying sadly to the twelve, *"Will ye also go away?"* (vv. 66-67).

iii. Because the Church has always believed and taught this, and we cannot think it possible that our LORD would have uttered, and left unexplained, words which would have led the Church into error, instead of truth.

Affections.—Make an act of faith in the Real Presence; pray that you may realize that Presence more and more; resolve to be very recollected at the Holy Eucharist.

FRIDAY AFTER FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RUIN OF CONSCIENCE.

"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more."—Numb., xxii., 18-19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Balaam through the dark hours of the night wrestling with GOD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may ever preserve uninjured the faculty of Conscience.

The history of Balaam might be entitled a drama of the Ruin of Conscience. Without mention of details which would distract us, our attention is directed to a few scenes, in which are displayed the workings of Conscience, and the crisis of a life. Balaam was a great man, intellectual, and religious, with holy desires, clear knowledge of truth, and a strong wish to do right, but a ruling passion—the love of money. The message of Balak, appealing directly to this besetting sin, was the turning-point of his life.

I. Consider the action of Conscience at first :

i. It is in a healthy condition, and without hesitation speaks what is recognized by Balaam without doubt as GOD's will. *"The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you"*—v. 13.

ii. At first a victory is won, and that with great ease.

II. Consider the second trial of the Conscience :

i. The messengers return with a still greater bribe. Balaam enunciates the true principle of a religious man—*"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more"* (v. 18); but he adds, *"Tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more"* (v. 19). He knew that GOD had spoken, and that GOD could not change, but the love of money and honour blinds him, and makes him, in his desire to possess the prize, forget the character of GOD.

ii. What a night was that for Balaam! Wrestling with his Conscience, struggling with his GOD, as he thinks of the glittering heaps of gold, and the honours of Balak's court. He longs for them, and begins to feel that GOD is hard in holding him back when fortune is within his grasp.

iii. Conscience at last gives way ; he makes a compromise. On the one hand he salves his conscience by a repetition of his principle, *"Yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do"* (v. 20); but on the other hand, he goes to Balak, although without hesitation he had said, *"The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."* He has made Conscience speak his will, not GOD's; and now he persuades himself that his will is GOD's.

III. Consider the third trial which GOD in mercy gives him :

i. The angel of the LORD meets him ; the ass speaks ; for a moment he is terror-stricken, and realizes his sin, and says *"I have sinned.....now.....I will get me back again"* (v. 34)—the only right course, to retrace his steps.

ii. He thinks it over ; another terrible struggle between his besetting sin and his conscience. Alas! he falls back on the old compromise. I will go ; there can be no harm in going, if I only speak what GOD tells me. He goes into temptation, but resolved not to yield beyond a certain point.

iii. He keeps his resolution ; he does not speak more than GOD puts in his mouth, he has most pious sentiments. So the devil lets us keep a resolution sometimes to re-assure us, to deceive us as to our true condition. He keeps his resolve, but the faculty of Conscience is shattered, wounded, ruined !

IV. Consider the result of this—a dumb Conscience :

i. He counselled the Moabites to tempt the Israelites to degrading sin.

ii. He died fighting against those very people whom, in GOD's Name, he had blessed.

iii. Through all this his Conscience was dumb ; there was no more struggle, or compromise ; it had ceased to trouble him. Perhaps through all this he preserved his religious sentiments, though he did not act on them.

Affections.—Realize the fearful danger of trifling with Conscience ; make an act of contrition for all disregard of its voice in the past ; pray that your Conscience may be enlightened by the HOLY GHOST ; resolve always to obey the first whisper of Conscience.

SATURDAY AFTER FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

BALAAM.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"—Numb., xxiii., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Balaam in religious rapture uttering this holy prayer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in your life you may never be satisfied with religious feelings without fruits.

Balaam's character has seemed to some a puzzle; let us study it.

I. Consider on the bright side:

i. He had an accurate knowledge of God, and clear views of moral right; there can be no higher principle of action than that enunciated by Balaam (xxii., 18).

ii. He used his theology in teaching others; he was allowed to see the vision of the Almighty, to speak precious truths, to utter a great prophecy (xxiv., 17-20).

iii. He had the most exalted religious sentiments, the most pious aspirations—in a word, a religious nature.

II. Consider on the dark side:

i. He violated the voice of Conscience by doing for love of money what God had distinctly told him not to do—going to Balak.

ii. He taught Balak to seduce Israel to sin against that Holy God in whom he himself believed.

iii. He died fighting against God's people, and without any sign of repentance.

III. Consider the meaning and teaching of Balaam's conduct:

i. His life was an apparent contradiction; a man whose words and feelings were all right, but whose actions were all wrong; a man whose head was full of light, but whose heart was dark; who could describe clearly the right path, but himself took the wrong one.

ii. The explanation of this inconsistent life is clear: The *presence* of a strong besetting sin, and the *absence* of a Conscience. Once, before he had ruined his conscience, he had been a really good man; now he retained the outside of godliness, the principles of morality, the poetry of religion, but they did not touch his life.

iii. This character is not a rare one, for alas! inconsistent Christians are frightfully common; men with the garb and phraseology of religion, but not its life; who, like Balaam, want to die the death of the righteous, but will not live the life of the righteous. Nothing is more delusive and dangerous than religious feelings which are never carried into action. It has been said:—“Hell is paved with good intentions.”

Affections.—Realize that we shall not be judged by our sentiments, but by our actions; pray to be delivered from self-deception; resolve to examine whether you carry out your principles.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse."—S. Luke, xiv., 16, 17, 18.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the guests, engrossed in their worldly interests, receiving the summons.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be found ready when God's message comes to call you to Him.

This parable is not to be confounded with that of the marriage of the king's son (S. Matt., xxii., 1-14), from which it differs in much of its imagery, in its scope and purpose, and in the occasion and place in which it was spoken.

I. Consider the bidding:

i. This bidding may be taken for the time when the claims of God's Kingdom are realized, and the invitation accepted. It may be at Baptism or Conversion.

ii. The fact of having accepted the invitation implies the recognition of the duty of preparing for the supper, and keeping disengaged, ready for the servant's summons.

iii. The important lesson of this parable is man's responsibility to walk worthy of his vocation, to be found ready when the angel of death summons him away.

II. Consider the summons, "*Come; for all things are now ready*":

i. The Jewish Church had been bidden from the time of its foundation, had boasted of the call; but "*when the fulness of the time was come*" (Gal., iv., 4), when this message was brought, "*Come; for all things are now ready*," by its acts it replied, "*I pray Thee have me excused.*"

ii. The Christian Church had been bidden from its birth, and when the number of the elect is made up, this will be its call.

iii. The individual who has heard God's call knows that a time must come when, the opportunities of this life over, the summons will come for him. Yes, all things are ready on God's side, but is he ready? The mistake of the guests was that, after accepting the call, they allowed themselves to become so occupied in the things of this world, things not in themselves wrong, that when the call came it found them unprepared for God's Kingdom.

III. Consider the result of being unprepared—"*I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper*" (v. 24):

i. The Jewish Church, found unprepared, forfeited her vocation, and the Gentile took her place.

ii. The individual who has recognized that he has a vocation and has neglected to follow it, being engrossed in other things, will find, not that God's work has suffered by his negligence, not that his place in heaven is left empty, but that another has been called to do his work and to take his place.

iii. The loss of vocation means the loss of the soul; for while the call is of God's free grace, it implies, as all privileges, a corresponding responsibility on man's part, to accept and prepare for it.

Affections.—Realize the uncertainty of the death summons; examine whether you are so occupied with life's cares that you are not ready; pray to be delivered from sudden death; resolve to prepare to die.

MONDAY AFTER SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE THREE EXCUSES.

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."—S. Luke, xiv., 18-19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the unprepared guests excusing themselves.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize the responsibility of God's call.

The three excuses represent the three classes of persons, who, without leading wicked lives, neglect God's service for that of the world.

I. Consider the first excuse, "*I have bought a piece of ground*":

i. This corresponds with the first class in the Parable of the Marriage Supper, the one who went to his farm, or rather to his estate. (*τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρόν*.)

ii. This is the landed proprietor, the rich man, who would enjoy what he possesses; so our LORD says, "*It is easier for a camel*," &c. (S. Luke, xviii., 25); so our experience tells us, that riches harden the heart against the Kingdom of CHRIST.

iii. And yet it need not be so, for, if faithfully used, riches enable us to do much for the poor, and for God's Church; and with them we may make friends of those who will receive us into everlasting habitations (S. Luke, xvi., 9); we may lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven.—S. Matt., vi., 20.

II. Consider the second excuse, "*I have bought five yoke of oxen*":

i. This corresponds to the man, in the similar parable, who went to his merchandize.

ii. This represents those who want to be rich, who are so occupied in the struggle to acquire wealth that they have no time for religion. This class is different from the first: with the one the heart has become hardened by *having*, with this the mind is occupied in *getting*; the one has no *taste* for religion, the other no *time* for it.

iii. And yet we are to labour, and do our work in the world energetically; only we are not to be over anxious. We are to seek *first* the Kingdom of God. Do I?

III. Consider the third excuse, "*I have married a wife*":

i. Here it is the affections of this world, and pure and right affections which are made the excuse for neglecting the call and service of God; and, because they are pure and right, the man does not say as the others, "*I pray thee have me excused*," but simply, "*I cannot come*."

ii. How often the cares and duties of home life are the cause of our neglecting God; the worries of home, how often they eat out the religion of the heart.

iii. And yet those ties ought to lead us nearer to God. The wife ought to help the husband to serve God, instead of perhaps driving him from God by her inconsistency or frivolity. A family ought to be an additional incentive to be very careful about religious duties, both as an example to the children, and to bring God's blessing on those we love.

Affections—Realize that each of these men thought they had a good excuse, that none of them were living bad lives; examine whether anything is causing you to neglect religious duties; pray that you may set a good example to those around you; resolve to let nothing keep you from the service of God.

TUESDAY AFTER SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE Two SONS.

"A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first."—S. Matt., xxi., 28-32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a self-righteous man listening to a sermon, and applying it to his neighbour.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from blindness and self-deception.

The two sons here represent two great moral divisions among men, with which our LORD, both during His Ministry and now, comes in contact; there is a third class to which this parable does not refer, for neither of these is held up as an example.

I. Consider the parable as it refers primarily to the Jews:

i. The publicans and sinners, whose lives were an open violation of the law, by their acts were continually answering to God's commandments, "*I will not*"; but these, at the preaching of S. John (v. 32), repented, amended their lives, and were ready to receive CHRIST.

ii. The Pharisees, professing a zeal for the law, and scrupulous about its smallest detail, with their lips were always saying, "*I go, sir*"; but, when John came "*in the way of righteousness*" (i. e., as an ascetic, the very sort of righteousness they pretended to admire), they went not; entered not into that vineyard in which they were bidden to go work (though they had always been talking about it), and by their lives contradicted the religious professions of their lips.

II. Consider this parable in its bearing on the two great classes with which our LORD deals now:

i. The open sinner, whose reckless life is a defiant refusal to obey GOD'S commands, may be touched after a while, and truly repent; and, realizing his sin, may become zealous in GOD'S service.

ii. The moral man, who prides himself on the strict observance of those of God's laws, which from temperament he has no great temptation to break, but who neglects all those religious principles of action which alone can make his works pleasing to GOD, is unmoved by GOD'S call to penitence.

III. Consider our LORD's explanation, "*Ye repented not afterward, that ye might believe him*" (v. 32):

i. We learn here the root of the evil, that unrepented sin is the moral hindrance to faith; an intellect wounded by sin cannot believe till that wound has been healed by penitence.

ii. We see that the most dangerous of all states is that of self-righteousness, that of thinking that religious profession is enough.

Affections.—Realize the danger of self-deception; pray for light to see your self; resolve to examine whether you act up to your professions.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

LOT'S WIFE.

"Remember Lot's Wife."—S. Luke, xvii., 32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the party under the guidance of the angel fleeing from the burning city.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that remembering Lot's wife you may put your hand to the plough, and never look back.

Of all the women in the Bible there is only one that our LORD *commands* us to remember, Lot's wife. Some sneer at the story as mythical; our LORD endorses it.

I. Consider the history:

i. Lot's wife, by angelic intervention, is miraculously preserved from sharing the fate of the doomed city; she is warned, "*Escape for thy life; look not behind thee*" (Gen., xix., 17); but, perhaps the hindmost one of the escaping party she does linger to look back, and is overwhelmed by the fiery shower, and turned into a pillar of salt.

ii. In the life of S. Paul we have the perfect contrast to this. Spiritually his experience was like hers. By a miraculous interference from heaven S. Paul is saved from perishing with the world while fighting against God; and he takes for the motto of his life, "*This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil., iii., 13-14).

II. Consider in what the sin consisted:

i. It is one act, one look only; so often one step decides a life; and yet probably every important step in life has been prepared for by a long though unrecognized tendency in that direction.

ii. First there is the not valuing, not desiring what is before her; then the lingering, longing for, and at last looking back on what she was leaving behind; that look was a prophecy of what her future would have been had she reached Zoar, and disclosed what the past had done towards forming her character—how she had learned, by neglect of God, not only not to hate, but at last to love her life in Sodom.

iii. There is no thought of *returning* to the burning city, she is too much frightened for that; but while she is driven from the city by fear, her heart is there still; her outer life may be altered, her character is unchanged.

III. Consider the lesson to us:

i. Baptism or Absolution is the time of our escape from the perishing world, when the guide is given in the counsel perhaps of one of God's priests; but after awhile the old sin *revives in the affections*, and instead of remembering it with hatred and horror, the recollection gives pleasure—this is looking back.

ii. There may be no return to the sin, too much fear of consequences for that; but it is gazed back upon without penitence, remembered without pain, it is loved; this looking back may seem to some but a small thing, but what ingratitude to God, after all His manifest love, after being rescued from destruction.

iii. The history of Lot's wife teaches us with startling force this principle, that God regards not merely what we *do*, but what we *are*; the look revealed what she was. It is not enough to be kept by fear from committing a sin, if we are wishing to do it, and in thought perhaps living in that sin.

Affections.—Gratitude for God's love in saving you from the perishing world; pray that you may have a hatred of sin; resolve to resist all temptations to think with pleasure of sins of the past.

THURSDAY AFTER SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SACRIFICE.

"This do in remembrance of Me."—S. Luke, xxii., 19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Vision S. John describes (Rev., v., 6)—“*A Lamb as it had been slain,*” standing in the midst of the throne of heaven.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always join devoutly in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice.

I. Consider the law of Sacrifice :

i. From the time that Adam sinned, man has never ventured to draw near to GOD without sacrifice ; and yet, man had nothing worthy to offer, for the taint of sin was on everything. The religion of the Old Testament was essentially sacrificial, because each sacrifice foreshadowed some aspect of the life and work of the Lamb of GOD, the only perfect Sacrifice.

ii. The word Sacrifice has two meanings, is used by us in two senses. It means the act of slaying the victim, and in this sense we speak of the Sacrifice of the Cross; it means the victim after it has been slain ; in this sense we speak of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist ; so that, while it is a memorial of the Passion, in no sense is the Sacrifice of the Eucharist a repetition of Calvary.

iii. The Jewish sacrifices of life had three distinct stages : (a.) Mactation ; (b.) Presentation ; (c) Consumption. So CHRIST is the Victim : (a.) Slain on Calvary ; (b.) ever offering Himself to the Father, naturally in heaven, supernaturally on our Altars on earth ; (c.) consumed in the Holy Communion by His people.

II. Consider the Eucharist as a Sacrifice :

i. “*Behold the Lamb of God*” (S. John, i., 29). This is our LORD’s title as the Sacrifice, and it is addressed to Him in our Liturgy, in the Gloria in Excelsis, after the consecration, while He is present on the Altar.

ii. “*In the midst of the throne.....stood a Lamb as it had been slain*” (Rev., v., 6)—the perfect (*ως ἐσφαγμένον*) implying the continuance of the sacrificial character of the Victim ; but our LORD is everywhere, and always the same, and what He is on the throne of heaven, that He must be on the altars of the Church. Besides the words of Institution, “*Do this in remembrance of Me,*” are sacrificial. (*τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*:—*ποιέω* is used generally in the Sept. for “*to offer,*” and *ἀνάμνησις* means an objective *memorial*, not a subjective remembrance.)

iii. “*In every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering*” (Mal., i., 11). (*θυσία ραθαρά*, Sept., a pure sacrifice.) There is but one Pure Offering, CHRIST, and how is He offered in every place, unless in the Holy Eucharist ?

III. Consider some practical results of the Holy Eucharist being a Sacrifice :

i. When we are not prepared to communicate we may be present to join in offering the Holy Sacrifice ; not that we should lessen the number of our Communions on this account, but that we should add to them many Eucharists offered, when we could not rightly communicate.

ii. We may always offer the Holy Eucharist for the needs of ourselves, and those for whom we desire to pray, whether struggling in the Church Militant or resting in Paradise.

iii. By the offering of the Holy Eucharist GOD is most glorified and man most blessed ; never to come except to receive the Communion is selfish, gradually obscures the doctrine of the Sacrifice, as experience has proved ; since worship is something we give to GOD, not something we receive from Him, and the Eucharist is the highest act of Christian worship ; hence the Church’s rule, to be present, though not to receive unless prepared, every Sunday and day of obligation.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the privilege of joining in this great Sacrifice ; make an act of oblation of yourself in union with that of our Blessed LORD ; pray for greater devotion at the Holy Eucharist.

FRIDAY AFTER SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN IN THE HOUSE.

"And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straightly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country."—S. Matt., ix., 27-32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the two blind men following our LORD with their supplications.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in prayer.

I. Consider why our LORD so frequently healed the blind:

i. Blindness is fearfully common in the East, owing to the dust and sand entering the eyes and producing inflammation, and also from sleeping in the open air on the roofs of houses; there was thus a natural reason for the frequency of the healing of this disease.

ii. There was a spiritual reason; for sin indulged in produces moral blindness; it is in proportion to our freedom from sin that we see spiritual things; *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* (S. Matt., v., 8.)

iii. JESUS said of Himself: *"I am the Light of the world."* (S. John, viii., 12.) His work was to give light to the blind.

II. Consider the trial of the faith of these two men:

i. They followed our LORD by the way, crying for mercy; but it was not till they followed Him into the house that He healed them. In this, though in a less degree, they were tried like the woman of Canaan.

ii. JESUS asked them, *"Believe ye that I am able to do this?"* He requires thus a confession of their faith.

iii. *"According to your faith be it unto you."* By these words our LORD proves the truth of their confession of faith, by making their faith the measure of His gift; their faith was real; and so their eyes were opened.

III. Consider further:

i. *"Then touched He their eyes."* This is common to every instance of healing the blind.

ii. He gave them a command, *"See that no man know it,"* an injunction to spiritual reserve, as to God's dealings with your own soul. How many lose part of God's gift by talking of it!

iii. They disobeyed the command. Gratitude was their excuse, but it would have been better proved by their obedience; for, *"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."* (I. Sam., xv., 22.)

Affections.—Realize the imminent danger of the dust of sin blinding the eyes of the soul; pray for more faith in prayer; resolve to obey accurately the spiritual counsel, given you by those to whom God sends you.

SATURDAY AFTER SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FACE OF GOD.

"When Thou saidst, Seek ye My Face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy Face, Lord, will I seek."—Psalm, xxvii., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a picture of our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so seek God's Face here, that hereafter you may behold it in the unveiled glory of heaven.

This text is peculiarly striking, as being God's revelation to man of the true aim of life, and the response of man's heart, promising to act on this revelation.

I. Consider a face :

i. It is the most interesting, the most fascinating object in the world; why? not because of its beauty of colour, for the colours of a painting may vie with it in brilliancy; not because of its beauty of form, for the proportions of a sculpture may surpass it in perfection; then, why? because it is the only glimpse we are permitted here of the beauty of a soul, because it is lighted up, animated by a character.

ii. Character more or less finds its utterance in the face, traces the lines, alters the expression. It is a well-known fact that change of character means change of face; the sweet child's face may become brutalized and degraded by crime; the hardened, reckless look often becomes softened and spiritualized by change of life.

iii. We study the characters of great men sometimes best in their works; and their faces, when they belong to another country or age, in their portraits; and perhaps we hope to see them some day, and feel that we shall recognize them at once.

II. Consider the Face of GOD :

i. What is it? The Beatific Vision, Heaven. *"Thine eyes shall see the KING in His Beauty."* (Isaiah, xxxiii., 17.) But we cannot bear that sight all at once; we must educate the faculties by which we are to apprehend It.

ii. *"Seek ye My Face."* Where? Everywhere in Creation. *"For now we see through a glass darkly"* (lit., through a mirror— $\delta\acute{\iota}\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\rho\acute{o}\nu$). (I. Cor., xiii., 12.) Creation is a vast mirror, in which are reflected God's attributes, Beauty, Goodness, Truth, Wisdom, Power, &c.; so that in Creation we may study, so to speak, God's character; in Creation, as in a painting, or better, as in a mirror, we may contemplate God's Face.

iii. We study that Face here, that we may be prepared to behold Him hereafter, in all the glory of eternity.

III. Consider the response—*"My heart said unto Thee, Thy Face, Lord, will I seek"*:

i. This ought to be the one aim of our life; for Happiness is the finding of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True; to rise up in response to God's revelation; to see everywhere around us, in every kingdom of nature, in every school of science, in every form of art or beauty, in every manifestation of goodness or truth, some reflection of the character of God, in whom is all Goodness, all Beauty, all Truth.

ii. Practically the purpose of many a life is to get out of God's Presence; in one sense so impossible!—Ps., cxxxix., 7-9—in another sense so easy!

iii. But especially in Prayer, Meditation, and the Sacraments, let this be the thought with which you approach them; and you will here find your joy in learning more and more of that Face, until at last (to use a faint illustration, like a traveller who has for years looked forward to and read about some glorious scene) you see in unveiled beauty the Face of God Incarnate, the Beatific Vision, and find the consummation of life and joy in that sight.

Affections.—Realize the nearness of God to us in the surroundings of daily life; pray for more earnestness in seeking God; resolve that to-day you will let all that you see and hear of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, lead you to think of God.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

HUMILITY THE LIVERY OF GOD.

"All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."—I. S. Peter, v., 5-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the servant of a powerful king protected from injury or insult by the livery he wears.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be clothed with Humility.

"Casting all your care upon Him." This most glorious result depends on the practice of Humility. People generally fail to see that the ability to do this is the result of our fulfilling the precepts of the first part of the text; *i. e.*, that it is only those who are clothed with Humility who can cast all their care on GOD.

I. Consider what Humility is :

i. Self-knowledge; not self-depreciation.

ii. The comparison of self with the standard of our Blessed LORD's life, not with our fellow-men; not like the Pharisee in the temple who used the publican as a foil to his virtues.

iii. The realization of the true relation existing between yourself and GOD.

II. Consider the beauty and force of the expression, "*Be ye clothed.*"

(*ἐγκομβώσασθε.* *Gird on Humility.*) The *ἐγκόμβωμα* was the garment of a slave; and this precept is best illustrated by our Blessed LORD, when girding Himself with a napkin as a servant, He washed His apostles' feet, which action S. Peter would well remember.—S. John, xiii., 4-18. It shows what Humility is :

i. Our relationship to GOD; that of a slave to his master. "*Whose I am, and Whom I serve.*" (Acts, xxvii., 23.)

ii. Our relationship to others. "*Be subject one to another.*"

iii. Humility is the livery of GOD; and if we are clothed with God's livery we are under his protection, and so with confidence may cast all our cares on Him.

III. Consider the results of Humility :

(1.) Negatively; lessening the cares of life; for Pride not only mars every virtue, but is at the root of most of our unhappiness :

i. All that large class of cares which come from others' treatment of us is robbed of its sting, if we are humble.

ii. A great many temptations lose their force when, like the blades of grass, we humbly bow our heads to the storm, and at once rise erect when it has passed.

iii. Many worries come from a false estimate of our own importance, from which Humility would save us.

(2.) Positively; placing us under the active protection of GOD; for Humility is a recognition of our relationship to GOD, and a fulfilment of its duties :

i. We are His children; if we are *obedient*, we can cast all our care on a Father, Who cares for us.

ii. We are His slaves; if we are *faithful*, we can cast all our care on a Master, Who cares for us.

iii. We are His creatures; if we are *trustful*, we can cast all our care on a Creator, Who cares for us.

Affections.—Realize your true relation to GOD; pray for the virtues of obedience, fidelity, and trustfulness; resolve to practice Humility.

MONDAY AFTER THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WATCHFULNESS.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."—I. S. Peter, v., 8-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a sentinel at his post keeping watch.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of watchfulness.

I. Consider the enemy:

i. *"Your adversary the devil;"* his power, cunning, and perseverance.
ii. *"As a roaring lion;"* this refers to one method of the devil's assault, that of the fury of open persecution; characteristic of the first and last ages of CHRIST's Church.

iii. *"Walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;"* i. e., by incorporating us with him through mortal sin.

II. Consider how you are to meet this enemy:

i. *"Be sober;"* the opposite to pride and presumption, one great cause of sin.

ii. *"Be vigilant;"* the opposite to sloth and despair, the other great cause of sin.

iii. *"Resist steadfast in the faith;"* the warfare with Satan is defensive; we cannot attack him, or venture upon his ground, but, strengthening our own position, we must wait, and watch, to resist his attacks, opposing to him the shield of faith, for *"this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* (I. S. John, v., 4.)

III. Consider the thought proposed as a help to us in our warfare:

i. We are not peculiar in our position, all CHRIST's soldiers have the same experience.—(I. Cor., x., 13.)

ii. The same afflictions (i. e., temptations and crosses) have befallen others; not a trial in our life, but thousands have groaned under it, and resisted, or borne it; if we say our afflictions were impossible to be borne, we shall at the Last Day be confronted by those who, for the love of CHRIST, bore all.

iii. *"Accomplished;"* temptation has its end, and cannot be withdrawn till that end be reached, and that is our perfection.

Affections.—Realize the constant danger you are in; pray for grace to see truly what your special temptations are; resolve to watch with great care against all temptations which may come to you to-day.

TUESDAY AFTER THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GRACE AND GLORY.

"But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."—I. S. Peter, v., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a steep and dangerous path leading to a mountain-top bathed in the glories of the setting sun.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may have grace joyfully to tread whatever path of suffering will best lead to our perfection.

I. Consider the Call of God:

- i. GOD hath called us into His eternal glory; this is our Vocation; how great and glorious!
- ii. The condition of this call, the means by which this end is to be reached, is suffering here for a little while; for there is no other path to the kingdom of glory, but that which our LORD trod, the Way of the Cross.

iii. The end of this call is our perfection; the faculties developed, and the dross purged away by suffering, we are left perfect; *i. e.*, we fulfil GOD's purpose for us as individuals, and so enter that kingdom of glory, where all is perfect.

II. Consider the Call of the World:

- i. The world calls us unto its illusive glories; to taste its transient pleasures, to seek its empty honours.
- ii. The means by which it allures are pleasure, and exemption from suffering; and, when these fail, it attempts to drive us by threats, the roars of the lion.

iii. The end is always disappointment, degradation of every faculty, death.

III. Consider our grounds of encouragement:

i. The "BUT," with which the verse is introduced, connects it with the previous statement, and signifies,—you have only to be vigilant, and resist, and GOD will care for all the rest; your work is to struggle; do this, and GOD will give the victory.

ii. The first proof of His grace was that He *called* you, and He will not cut off that grace till it is perfected in glory.

iii. The GOD of *all* grace will HIMSELF (*αὐτὸς*) make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Affections.—Realize the glory of GOD's kingdom into which you are called; pray that you may not shrink from the needful struggle; resolve to trust GOD more in times of difficulty.

WEDNESDAY AFTER THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LOST SHEEP.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."—S. Luke, xv., 4-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Good Shepherd finding the wandering sheep.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never resist His seeking love.

The three parables in this chapter, which together illustrate the whole Gospel of Penitence, may be taken as tracing, from its very beginning to its end, the work of penitence, and showing the relation of each of the three Persons of the Ever Blessed Trinity to this work. This parable shows us the seeking love of GOD the SON as the first step towards man's return.

I. Consider the wandering of the sheep:

i. If we take the parable of mankind as a race, we shall begin with the fall of Adam, and the Old Testament will be the history of man's wanderings, while the New will tell of the Shepherd's love and patience in following, finding, and restoring the lost sheep.

ii. Of the individual, the first confession is the sad account of the wanderings, from the first act of wilful sin to the joyous moment of penitence.

iii. The image of a silly sheep pictures one aspect of sin, one class of sinners; that sin is folly, that many sin from foolish self-will without realizing fully what they are doing.

II. Consider the search of the Shepherd:

i. Of the race, it is the history of the Incarnation and Passion of JESUS CHRIST.

ii. Of the individual, it is the record of all the movements of preventing grace, all the calls and opportunities, until at last the heart was touched.

iii. While we must remember that our LORD says "*No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him*" (S. John, vi., 44), yet the first thing which the penitent sinner realizes is CHRIST's seeking love for his soul.

III. Consider the finding and return of the sheep:

i. The state of the sinner awakening to the bewildering sense that he is lost, and then the revulsion of joy, as the Voice of JESUS reaches his heart, and tells him that he is found.

ii. The return home; too weak to do much himself, but gently carried back to the fold of the Church; for this parable tells of the dangers of the wilderness outside the fold, and ends with the sinner's restoration to the place of safety.

iii. The joy of the shepherd, together with his friends and neighbours, tells of the joy of JESUS with the saints and angels over each penitent sinner.

Affections.—Make acts of hope and gratitude; pray that you may correspond to God's love; resolve to make a special act of intercession for the unconverted.

THURSDAY AFTER THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COMMUNION.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you."—S. John, vi., 53.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles in the Upper Chamber making their first Communion.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always approach your Communions with such preparation that you may lose none of the blessings.

The Holy Eucharist is not only a sacrifice, but a Feast upon a sacrifice, a Communion; as typified in the sacrifices under the law.

I. Consider what the Holy Communion does for us:

i. The Sacraments are extensions of the Incarnation, *i. e.*, they do for the individual what the Incarnation did for man as a race.

ii. Mankind was in antagonism with God, his fellow-man, and himself. By the Incarnation and Atonement man was reconciled as a race; by the Holy Communion the individual is made one with God, his brother, and himself (by the gift of peace in his own heart).

iii. We must beware lest we make the Holy Eucharist not a Communion. Others may deny the Real Presence, or the Sacrifice, without affecting their reality; but we may destroy the Communion by our want of penitence towards God, or by our want of charity towards our brother.

II. Consider that our Communions are the channels by which life is conveyed to us from God:

i. The three parts of man's nature, moral, mental and animal, are effects of which God is the continual cause; but the link in each is some material sign; *i. e.*, Sacraments, the study of God's works, food.

ii. The moral and animal parts are in strict analogy, for each is sustained by something which we receive from without and assimilate to ourselves, the food of the body, and the Holy Communion, the Food of the soul. Not to receive the Holy Communion is to have no life, because it is to ignore the link which connects us with the principle of the life of the soul, God. It is spiritual suicide by starvation.

iii. By the Holy Communion the CHRIST implanted in our nature in Baptism is nourished, and grows in us till our whole nature becomes assimilated to CHRIST. Those who are not communicants are like the people of Palestine; they hear our LORD's words, they reject Himself.

III. Consider some of the benefits of Communion:

i. Strengthening: as food strengthens the body, supplying what is needed for labour, and growth; so does the Bread of Heaven strengthen and refresh the soul.

ii. Healing: not of mortal sin, which requires absolution, but as food has a healing property, in restoring what is lost by sickness, and by strengthening the constitution, enabling it to throw off some forms of the disease; so our Communions have a power to heal all but the mortal diseases of our soul.

iii. Union: with CHRIST and His Body, the Church; a union which should grow with each Communion till consummated in the union of heaven.

Affections.—Adore our LORD present in the Holy Eucharist; pray Him to come into your soul; resolve to make a special preparation for your next Communion.

FRIDAY AFTER THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY.

"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."—S. Luke, xv., 8-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the woman patiently searching for the lost coin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize more the value of your soul.

Here we have the work of the HOLY GHOST in the Church; the last parable left the soul in the Fold; this tells of the soul's dangers there, and GOD's care for it.

I. Consider the lost piece of money as typifying a certain class of sinners:

i. The soul has a value, belongs to the heavenly mint from which it was issued, is a coin of the world to come.

ii. This soul is ignorant of its own value, or of its loss, or that it does belong to any one; it lies useless, but contented.

iii. This soul is lost in the House; not like the sheep having strayed of its own self-will away from the Fold, but, while nominally in the Church, never having realized its duties or privileges, and living, not wilfully, but from ignorance, in a state of sin.

II. Consider the seeker:

i. This woman represents the HOLY GHOST, and the search here shows the work of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity in converting and renewing the sinner; as the love of a mother for her child is the love of the HOLY GHOST for the soul.

ii. The House, over which the woman presides, is the Church, for the Church is the Organ of the HOLY GHOST, as we imply in our Creed, I believe in the HOLY GHOST, the Holy Catholic Church.

iii. The woman knows the value of what she has lost; so GOD knows the true worth of the soul, and the fearfulness of its fall into sin, of its loss.

III. Consider the search:

i. The lighting of the candle; first, the light of the Holy Spirit must shine on and in the soul to reveal its true state and convince it of sin.—(S. John, xvi., 8; Zeph., i., 12.)

ii. Then the diligent sweeping; the dust flies about, making everything very unpleasant, revealing perhaps the accumulations of years.

iii. At last the coin is found, and, as in the parable of the Lost Sheep, GOD's finding the soul is synonymous with the soul's finding GOD.

Affections.—Thanksgiving to GOD the HOLY GHOST; pray that you may realize your true condition; resolve to use the light given you really to find out your sins.

SATURDAY AFTER THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

JOY IN HEAVEN.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repeneth."—S. Luke, xv., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the angels rejoicing over thine own penitence.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize more the fellowship of the angels.

The relation that exists between earth and heaven is indeed wonderful, and created in a wonderful way, by the Incarnation.

I. Consider the three great occasions on which this world has given joy and wonderment to the angels:

- i. Our Creation.—(Job, xxxviii., 6-7.)
- ii. Our Redemption, through the Incarnation.—(Heb., i., 6; S. Luke, ii., 13-14.)
- iii. Our Penitence.—(S. Luke, xv., 10.)

II. When we think of the brightness and glory of the angels, of their beauteous home, and then of our nothingness, and sinfulness, is it not wonderful that they should care so much for us, love us so, that we are able to give them joy? And yet each of the parables in this chapter brings prominently forward the fact that our penitence causes joy in heaven. Consider why this is:

- i. It is a reflection of the love of GOD; angels love us, because GOD loves us.
- ii. The angels, since Gabriel's message to the B. V. Mary, claim each of us as the brothers of their King.
- iii. Because of the value and capabilities of the soul; it is immortal, and a jewel of GOD, and angels are now the guardians of these jewels.
- iv. The angels witnessed the Passion, and learnt from it our LORD's love for us; it did not make them jealous, and in our Penitence they see its fruits.
- v. We are carrying on the battle with Satan, which they began, and each sinner's repentance is another victory over the foe.
- vi. Angels and Heaven wait for us, for the filling up of the vacant places, and the consummation of the Kingdom of Glory.

III. Consider that the thought of the love and care of the angels for us should help us in our deeds of penitence, and devotion.

Affections.—Realize the interest heaven has in your individual life; pray for true penitence; resolve to let the thought of angelic love and guardianship be a check to you in the time of temptation.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE BONDAGE OF THE CREATURE.

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."—Rom., viii., 20-23.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the miseries of the world.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to use all creatures according to GOD's will.

I. Consider the creation and fall of the world:

i. The world was created by GOD (Gen., i., 1), and originally it was perfect, for omnipotence could not be the author of imperfection.

ii. The state of ruin described (Gen., i., 2) was produced by the agency of the devil, and was probably the result of the fall of the evil angels, who, if we take Rev., xii., 9, as referring to that event, were cast out into the earth.

iii. This earth then became the abode of Satan, and in bondage to him; for death was in Eden before the fall of Adam, for the trees could not grow, the animals could not live, but by the death of one another.

II. Consider the office of creatures:

i. Their true end is to glorify GOD, and fulfil the purpose of their creation by leading man to GOD; by ministering to his needs, teaching him the love of GOD; by their beauty and perfection, teaching him the power and wisdom of GOD; indeed creation is a ladder by which man may mount up into the heart of GOD.

ii. They are used by Satan as instruments of temptation, to lead man away from GOD. The beauty, that should have led him to adore the love and wisdom of GOD, leads him often to make them objects of his idolatry.

iii. Hence they are said to groan and travail in bondage, not willingly, being used against their true end, and instead of leading man to GOD alluring him to ruin, by exciting the passions of avarice, ambition, sensuality, &c.

III. Consider the deliverance of creatures; they are to be redeemed with man, and by man:

i. Used for GOD's glory, they are emancipated from this bondage; used against GOD, the very creatures cry out against man.

ii. They find their representative in man, who is the flower and crown of creation, by his body touching on every kingdom of nature.

iii. It is our work to drive Satan from this world, and so to deliver all creation into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD.

Affections.—Realize the beauty of nature; make acts of gratitude, love, and adoration to GOD for His good gifts; pray that you may be faithful in your stewardship; resolve to keep yourself detached from those creatures which are likely to be temptations to you.

MONDAY AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MOTE AND THE BEAM.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam that is in thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."—S. Luke, vi., 41-42.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD sternly denouncing the Pharisees as hypocrites.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from all hypocrisy.

Our LORD had just warned His hearers against the sin of uncharitable judgments, and now He proceeds to point out another danger, hypocrisy in judgment of others.

I. Consider :

i. That hypocrisy is the motive which leads us to gaze upon our brother's faults when we close our eyes to our own ; for, if we really hated and desired to put a stop to sin, we should certainly begin with ourselves ; and yet how often it is those who are loudest in the condemnation of some special sin in another, who are most lenient towards that same sin in themselves.

ii. That those who are involved in sin are incapable of helping others to conquer their faults, however much they may desire to do so ; for it is not so much by exhortation as by example, not so much by rebuke as by the power of personal influence, that we are able to help others ; and that influence depends, not on what we pretend to be, but on what we are.

iii. The contrast ; beholding from without a mote, a small fault in another, and not apprehending from within the beam, the greater one in ourself ; here too we see what ought to be in our eyes the relative magnitude of our brother's sins and our own, as mote and beam.

II. Consider some results of self-conquest in enabling us to help others :

i. By sympathy ; one of the greatest powers God has given to enable us, in this dark world, to bear one another's burdens ; but sympathy is only a help where it is the sympathy of one who has suffered like us, but has conquered ; it is no encouragement to hear of another having *yielded* to our temptation.

ii. By counsel ; founded on actual experience of what has helped us to gain our victory,—theory is but little use.

iii. By the influence of sanctity ; the greatest power of all, "*If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole*" (S. Matt., ix., 21), the virtue that goes forth from a sanctified life to heal others ; but sanctity is not the result of the absence of temptation, but of victory over it.

iv. How different from mere hypocritical fault-finding ; the hypocrite beholds, *i. e.*, stares at his brother's faults, and by so doing attracts the attention of others to them ; but he who has conquered himself sees clearly to help his brother get rid of his fault, and so, not only hides it from others, but cures it.

Affections.—Realize the danger of hypocritical judgment ; pray that you may recognize and overcome your own faults ; resolve to take up some one sin, which you have observed in others and know to exist in yourself, and to make a real effort to conquer it

TUESDAY AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WOMAN WITH A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY.

"And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."—S. Luke, xiii., 11-14.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the woman bowed down with her disease.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be loosed from the bonds of your sins.

I. Consider the woman as the representative of humanity:

i. Before the Incarnation, man was bowed down to the earth by the burden of sin; since then, how many a soul is in this condition.

ii. Man stooped to sin of his own free will; the bowing down was his own act and choice.

iii. Man was utterly unable to rise again of his own power, to throw off the sin he had chosen.

II. Consider the condition of this woman:

i. Her disease was not only physical, but the result of the presence of the spirit of evil, as the words show, "*a spirit of infirmity*," and "*whom Satan hath bound*" (v. 16).

ii. Her sickness had apparently first been mental, bringing her into a moody, melancholic state, which at last had its effect upon her body; how many of the ailments of life begin thus!

iii. She is healed by our LORD's touch, apparently without seeking it, but the very fact of her presence there, taken together with the words of the ruler, "*in them therefore come and be healed*" (v. 14), seems to imply that she was one of those who had come, expecting to be healed, and having the necessary faith.

III. Consider our LORD's dealing with the ruler:

i. The ruler murmurs at the breach of the Sabbath; our LORD in the expression, "*Thou hypocrite*," shows that this was not the real cause of his displeasure; how many make zeal for GOD the cloak for hatred of what is holy; how many think more of carrying out their own prejudices than of works of mercy, or truth.

ii. Our LORD confounds him by exposing his inconsistency; it is not breaking the Sabbath to loose a beast from the manger, where it has been tied but a few hours, and with some labour to lead it to watering; then why should he complain that a daughter of Abraham, who has been bound eighteen years, should be loosed by a mere word and touch? If one is a work of mercy, and necessity, how much more so is the other!

iii. His adversaries are ashamed, not converted; but the people rejoiced; so now the adversaries of CHRIST may be confounded, but not convinced, but GOD's people rejoice with grateful heart at the glorious works of His Church, at which the world cavils.

Affections.—Realize how easy it is to stoop to sin, how hard to rise again; pray for a love of truth; resolve to do some act for GOD's glory.

WEDNESDAY AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE STATER IN THE FISH'S MOUTH.

"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?" &c.—S. Matt., xvii, 24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD teaching S. Peter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a deeper knowledge of your Divine LORD.

I. Consider the tax:

i. It was not, as some have supposed, a civil impost due to Cæsar, as the penny of S. Matt., xxii., 19; *that* our LORD recognized, while the whole force of this miracle lies in the fact that this tax has no legitimate claim on Him.

ii. It was the Temple tax, the ransom of souls of Exod., xxx., 11, to be paid by every Jew above twenty years to the expenses of the Temple or Tabernacle; this is shown by the sum, a stater—four drachmæ for our LORD and S. Peter, exactly the half shekel each.

iii. It was probably at that time of imperfect obligation, hence the gentle tone of the question, or that may have been from a doubt whether our LORD was not more than man, and hence exempt from the tax to GOD.

II. Consider our LORD's question to S. Peter:

i. S. Peter, in his over-eagerness, had pledged our LORD to its payment, and thus risked disturbing the true relation of our LORD, as the Son of GOD, to other men, in even seeming to pay a ransom for His own soul.

ii. Our LORD "*prevented*" S. Peter with the question, "*Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?*" (v. 25), thus manifesting His divinity by showing that, though not present, He knew what had passed.

iii. From His own answer our LORD draws the conclusion, "*Then are the sons (νιόι) free*" (v. 26); He was the Son; as such He had been acknowledged by S. Peter in his great confession; how then could He be required to pay this tax, which was a recognition of a subordinate relation to God.

III. Consider the miracle:

i. Under this protest He will pay the money, as S. Peter had promised it, and lest any should be offended; so was He circumcised and baptized, not as of necessity.

ii. By the miracle He reasserts the true dignity of His Person, which the payment might have obscured, by showing that all things served Him, even the fishes of the sea.

iii. The miracle is therefore one of the most important manifestations of His Divinity.

Affections.—Realize the dignity of the Person of our Blessed LORD; pray for the grace of humility; resolve to be modest and careful in speaking on religious matters.

THURSDAY AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

MELCHIZEDEK.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine : and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him....And he gave him tithes of all."—Gen., xiv., 18-20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Melchizedek meeting the returning conqueror Abraham with the gifts of bread and wine.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that when your life's struggle is over our Blessed LORD may welcome you into that land of peace and righteousness of which He is King.

I. Consider Melchizedek as a type of CHRIST, and especially of CHRIST in the Holy Eucharist.

i. Melchizedek—King of Righteousness. One of the titles of CHRIST is “*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Jer., xxiii., 6), and “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled*” (S. Matt., v. 6); *i. e.*, they who hunger and thirst after CHRIST are fed and filled by Him in the Holy Communion.

ii. King of Salem—King of Peace. One of the titles of CHRIST is “*The Prince of Peace.*” (Isaiah, ix., 6.) The possession of CHRIST through the Holy Communion is the means by which the Prince of Peace reigns in the soul, which has been prepared for him; the Holy Eucharist is the Vision of Peace now, the pledge of eternal peace hereafter.

iii. Uniting in himself the Royal and Priestly functions (this is the first place in the Bible where the word Priest occurs), he comes forth alone to meet and bless the Conqueror; in all of which he is a type of our LORD.

II. Consider what is given and received:

i. The bread and wine, representing the outward elements of the Holy Eucharist.

ii. The Benediction: Without the benediction of the King of Righteousness the elements would remain powerless, but by it they become verily and indeed the Body and Blood of CHRIST; for “*Jesus took bread, and blessed it.*” (S. Matt., xxvi., 26.)

iii. Abraham gave tithes of all; so our Communion is the time for giving as well as receiving; as we receive then the greatest gift GOD can give to man, His Dear Son, so we must give to GOD worship, glory, thanks, and a portion of our substance, as a token of our gratitude and an acknowledgment of our dependence.

III. Consider some of the circumstances of the meeting:

i. It was as Abraham came back from the battle; the Eucharist is our refreshment after any great struggle; and when our last battle is fought, JESUS will come to meet and welcome His victorious soldiers.

ii. The bread and wine; the fruits of the earth were an earnest to him of the possession of Canaan, when finally conquered; so the Holy Eucharist is an earnest of the possession of heaven, when our battles here are all over.

iii. In the act of blessing we lose sight of Melchizedek; so our LORD's last act, at the Ascension as the cloud received Him out of their sight, was blessing; so the Priest ends each Eucharist with the benediction.

Affections.—Make an act of faith in the Holy Eucharist as the foretaste of heaven; pray for a blessing on your warfare through your next Communion; resolve to make some thank-offering to GOD.

FRIDAY AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WOMAN WHICH WAS A SINNER.

“And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”—S. Luke, vii., 37-38.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the woman weeping at JESUS’ feet.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have a real hatred of sin.

I. Consider what this woman was :

i. A sinner, notoriously so, she had sunk as low as a woman could sink, as the word (*ἀμαρτωλός*) implies.

ii. As a result probably of her sin she had become possessed with seven devils.—S. Luke, viii., 2.

iii. She was an example of one with a noble nature, and great gifts, but all ruined by sin.

II. Consider this woman’s first step in the life of penitence :

i. She had heard something of our LORD’s teaching, He had probably already cast out the seven devils, and thus had delivered her from a most terrible bondage ; she had learned to *believe* in Him, and realizing her misery she had begun to *hope* in Him, and looking away from herself to Him she had come to *love* Him.

ii. So fully did she realize the shame of the stains of sin within her that she thought little of the shame of others seeing and scorning her. She ran to the Fountain of Mercy to wash away those shameful spots, though in doing so she confessed before men what she was, a sinner.

iii. The signs of her penitence were :

(a.) Humility ; she stood at His feet behind, and kissed His feet.

(b.) Love ; her tears, her kisses, and all her actions.

(c.) Self-oblation ; she presents as a living sacrifice those members of her body, and faculties of her soul, and goods of her estate, which before she had abused in the service of Satan.—Rom., vi., 19.

III. Consider what this woman became :

i. A penitent of JESUS CHRIST ; and He absolved her—“*Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace*” (v. 50).

ii. A follower of JESUS CHRIST ; and she followed Him to the end.

iii. A saint of JESUS CHRIST ; the woman, which *was* a sinner, *is* a Saint—S. Mary Magdalene,* the Queen of Penitents.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, hope, and love ; pray that you may have grace to offer yourself truly a living sacrifice to our LORD ; resolve in your penitence to accept humiliation.

* The first Prayer-Book of Edward VI, in appointing this as the Gospel for S. Mary Magdalene’s Day, endorses the ancient opinion, that this woman was Mary Magdalene ; and with the majority of the Fathers, we may consider her identical with Mary of Bethany.

SATURDAY AFTER FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THE TWO DEBTORS.

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most ? Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." —S. Luke, vii., 41, 42, 47.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the forgiven sinner anointing CHRIST's feet.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true penitence.

I. Consider the relation between sin against GOD and sin against our neighbour :

i. The difference between the sins which we commit against God, and those which our fellow-men commit against us, is enormous; it is represented (S. Matt., xviii., 24-28) as 10,000 talents to 100 pence ; or as 1,250,000 : 1.

ii. The difference between the sins which one man and another commit against God is comparatively small, here it is as 500 pence to 50 ; or as 10 : 1.

iii. Whether we owe much or little we have nothing wherewith to pay ; the Saint, equally with the Sinner, must depend for his pardon on the mercy of God.

II. Consider on what the capacity for Love depends :

i. It is not he who has sinned most who is capable of loving most ; for that would involve a moral contradiction, and would be an encouragement to sin as the best preparation for love.

ii. It is he who is forgiven most ; *i. e.*, the debt here is not objective, but subjective ; for those whose natures have been least blunted, by what the world calls crime, are generally those who have the strongest sense of their own sinfulness ; so it is he that realizes the greatness of his debt to God, and therefore the greatness of God's forgiveness, who will love most.

iii. "*To whom little is forgiven the same loveth little*" ; means that those, who little realize their need of forgiveness, little grasp the guilt of sin, and will have little love for their Redeemer.

III. Consider the relation between Love and Penitence :

i. Love is not the cause, but the result of forgiveness ; "FOR" is here used in a logical, not in a causal sense ; her much love is quoted as the proof that much had been forgiven, not as the cause ; *i. e.*, her many sins had been already forgiven her, as may be seen from the fact that she loveth much ; whereas he, to whom little is forgiven, loveth little.

ii. Faith is the CAUSE of forgiveness, as shown in the formal Absolution (v. 50), "*Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace*" ; the forgiveness comes at the moment of Contrition, though the assurance of it in Absolution comes necessarily later.

iii. Sin unpardonable quenches love, but sin forgiven becomes the fuel of love. Being by God's grace what we are, we shall not fear to remember what we were when God's love found us ; and that recollection, instead of discouraging us, will be the best assurance that He, which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST.—Phil., i., 6.

Affections.—Realize that penitence is the road to love ; pray for a greater sense of the guilt of sin ; resolve to let the remembrance of sins of the past spur you on to deeds of love, and penitence.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

"And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship."—S. Luke, v., 1-4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD teaching in the ship.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always listen for, and profit by, the teachings of CHRIST.

I. Consider this scene as a parable :

i. The busy multitude thronging the shore, a type of the world; the lake, calm and tranquil, represents the spiritual life, the great contrast to the world; the ship, into which our LORD entered, the Church.

ii. The narrow strip of water between the ship and the people represents those Baptismal waters through which all must pass who would enter the Church.

iii. In this ship our LORD sits as the Teacher; those outside the Church, like those on the shore, hear and wonder, but do not understand; those in the ship, like S. Peter, hear and obey.

II. Consider the lake, so still and calm, and yet liable as we know to terrific tempests, as a type of the spiritual life with its seasons of calm in the service of God, and its times of darkness, of storms and temptations.

III. Consider that we must make good use of the seasons of calm in listening to, and learning from, the teaching of CHRIST, so that:

i. We may be prepared for times of storm, when JESUS seems to sleep, *e. g.*, times of special temptation.

ii. We may be ready to launch out into the deep, when He bids us, *e. g.*, at any great change in our life.

iii. We may know *how* to work for Him, when He tells us to let down our nets for a draught.

IV. Consider as both the teaching and call of CHRIST come to them in their ordinary vocation, so in the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of our life there is abundant sphere for CHRIST to teach us, and to call us to Himself.

Affections.—Realize the importance of *using* the calms in our spiritual life; pray that you may be found ready to follow, when JESUS calls you; resolve to be faithful in the daily duties of your state of life.

MONDAY AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE THREE REQUESTS OF CHRIST.

"Thrust out a little from the land."...."Launch out into the deep."...."Let down your nets for a draught."—S. Luke, v., 3-4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the contrast between the multitude thronging the sea shore and pressing upon one another, and our LORD and S. Peter in the ship floating on the calm waters of the Lake.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may obey at once each request of CHRIST.

The three requests of our LORD to S. Peter represent the three stages of His dealings with our souls. The entering into the ship may be taken for Baptism.

I. Consider the first request, *"Thrust out a little from the land:"*

i. When CHRIST enters the ship of your heart, and His work in you begins, this is His first request, to do a little for Him.

ii. To give up some of the world and its allurements, to detach yourself a little from the world.

iii. When this was obeyed, He taught ; when the soul begins to detach itself from the world, JESUS instructs it, and that soul learns to know Him, and then He makes the second request.

II. Consider the second request, *"Launch out into the deep:"*

i. No longer a little, but *all* for CHRIST, no more reservation or compromise, no longer keeping near the world, able at any time to return to it, but a decisive step, choosing GOD.

ii. Commit your soul entirely to that mighty deep, the Ocean of GOD's Will.

"Do with me what Thou wilt, O Lord, for I am Thine."

III. Consider the third request, *"Let down your nets for a draught:"*

i. When we have thus given ourselves to GOD, He lets us work for Him ; how much of the work we think we give to Him is valueless, because we have not first given Him ourselves.

ii. No work that is done in obedience to His call can be in vain.

iii. We are not to look for immediate results in the work we do for GOD—they knew not till their nets were taken up what was the result of the draught, and the drawing in of our net will not be till the last day. We are to work then, not for success, but for GOD.

Affections.—Make an act of oblation of yourself to God ; pray for the grace of detachment from the world ; resolve to come apart from the world that our LORD may teach you.

TUESDAY AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SERVICE OF CHRIST AND OF THE WORLD.

"And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net."—S. Luke, v., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a sinner, at his first conversion to GOD, reviewing his past life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be faithful in the service of CHRIST.

I. Consider when these words must be said :

i. At the day of Judgment. Will not this be the cry of the lost soul on beholding the results of its life? I *"have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing."*

ii. At the time of real turning to GOD. Is not this the confession of the experience of a life spent in the world's service?—but, by the mercy of GOD, there is then still time to add, *"Nevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net."*

II. Consider this retrospect of a worldly life :

i. It is well described as *"all the night."* The night, the time of darkness, when we mistake shadows, and dreams, for realities. With some it is all the night; youth, manhood, old age, all spent in the world's service; what a night!

ii. The diligence of this service of the world—toil, hard labour; but *"It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness."* (Ps., cxxvii., 2.)

iii. The result, nothing! Nothing which can be carried beyond the grave; nothing which can be drawn on to the eternal shores; nothing which will stand the cleansing fires.—I. Cor., iii., 13.

III. Consider the new life in prospect—*"Nevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes"*:

i. It was work done in obedience, and therefore full of blessing; no work can fail that is done at CHRIST's command.

ii. The work was done voluntarily, and cheerfully, not of compulsion; how often our work is spoiled because not done in this spirit; *e. g.*, religious exercises, daily work, disagreeable duties.

iii. The work, which with CHRIST's blessing produced so great a result, was the same work which had been so barren, in the same place, and under even greater difficulties (for the night was a better time for fishing than the day); so we learn that we may serve CHRIST in the very same sphere of usefulness in which we have been serving the world, and that following CHRIST does not require us to neglect our duties in the world; *e. g.*, S. Mark, v., 19-20.

Affections.—Make an act of contrition for the neglect of past duties; pray for a spirit of cheerful obedience; resolve to do your work in the Name of CHRIST.—Col., iii., 17.

WEDNESDAY AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HID TREASURE.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."—S. Matt., xiii., 44.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the man wearily ploughing.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to persevere in penitence.

This parable was spoken in the house to the disciples, who realized that there was a treasure to be found. In it we have a further step in this chain of parables. Man's side of the work begins. The imagery changes back to the field again, the harvest is over, and the stubble is being ploughed up.

I. Consider the reward of the penitent:

i. The field is man's nature, in it at Baptism a treasure has been hidden, even CHRIST Himself; but the field has been so used for the cultivation of other things that this is entirely forgotten.

ii. This man we may take as a lapsed sinner, like the Prodigal, who comes to himself, and to his GOD; he is ploughing up what seems to be the useless, barren field of his nature; he is trying to repent, yes, "*Break up your fallow ground.*" (Hos., x., 12.)

iii. He finds the treasure while ploughing, and where? In the earth of his own nature, the man who hid his LORD's money in the earth now finds it, and uses it.—S. Matt., xxv., 18.

II. Consider the work of the penitent:

i. The sight of the treasure carries his thoughts back to the kingdom to which it belongs, to the King whose head is on the coin; so at the first awakening of the soul, back in thought to the Father's House, up to heaven; the thought of Baptismal innocence, what I once was, what I might have been! as we read perhaps the lives of the Saints.

ii. The hiding the gift till the field is possessed is the realization that the treasure cannot be possessed without the field; it is useless to know the capacity of the soul unless we can use it; habits of sin contracted have to be fought against, self controlled and conquered, before the treasure can be appropriated.

iii. The selling all and buying the field is the struggle in the penitent to gain the mastery over self. There are two *Conversions*, first from sin to self, this is the discovery of the treasure and hiding it again; then from self to GOD, this is the selling all to buy it.

III. Consider the joy of the penitent:

i. The joy of *finding* amid all the sorrow of the ploughing, as he repents.

ii. The joy of *possessing* amid all the pain of self-sacrifice, as he learns self-denial.

iii. The joy of *using* amid all the toil of work for GOD, as he brings the CHRIST he has found to other souls.

Affections.—Realize the treasure in you; pray for self-conquest; resolve on some definite act of self-denial!

THURSDAY AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PASSOVER.

"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast."—I. Cor., v., 7-8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Israelites eating their first Passover.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always be rightly prepared to offer and to receive the Christian Passover.

The sacrifices under the Jewish law, of which the Passover was perhaps the most important, had three stages, Mactation, Presentation, Consumption.

I. Consider the mactation or slaying of the Paschal Lamb:

i. It was a lamb without blemish, slain as the sun went down; so our LORD was the Lamb without blemish, Who was slain in the world's eventide.

ii. It was roasted with fire; we may take this of the fire of divine love or of divine justice, or perhaps better, as the Emblem of the HOLY GHOST, by Whose operation both the Incarnation and the Consecration of the Holy Eucharist are effected.

iii. Slain first by the offerer himself, afterwards by the priests in the Temple for him as a memorial of the first Passover; so our LORD was slain by us, in that He died for our sins, and, while there is no repetition of that slaying, in the Holy Eucharist the priest offers the continual Memorial of the Passion.

II. Consider the Presentation:

i. The Blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the door posts.

ii. So our LORD in heaven pleads the merits of His Precious Blood for our redemption.

iii. So His Church on earth in the Holy Eucharist offers and presents that same sacrifice, pleads that same Precious Blood.

III. Consider the Consumption:

i. It was to be entirely consumed.

ii. The Holy Eucharist is a Feast upon a Sacrifice, a Communion.

iii. It was to be eaten at night, when their loins were girded, their shoes on, a staff in their hands; so in the night of this world, the Holy Communion is the pilgrim's food, but he must eat it prepared in its strength to journey to the heavenly Canaan.

IV. Consider that the Passover and the Holy Eucharist embrace the various classes of offerings:

i. It was a sin-offering, as the sprinkling of the Blood showed; so in the Canon of the Eucharist we pray that we "may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion"

ii. It was a whole burnt-offering, in that it was roasted entire with fire; so the Holy Eucharist is an offering of a sweet savour to GOD.

iii. It was a peace-offering, in that it was partaken of by the offerer and his family; so the Holy Eucharist, in that it is a Communion.

Affections.—Realize that each celebration of the Eucharist is the offering of the propitiatory sacrifice for quick and dead; pray that in the strength of your communions you may journey through the wilderness of this world; resolve to make some special preparation for your next Communion.

FRIDAY AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY.

"So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."—S. Mark, iv., 26-30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Church struggling in the world.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to realize CHRIST's promise, "*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*"

This parable, the only one peculiar to S. Mark, declares the secret energy of the seed sown, whether in the corporate Kingdom of God, the Church, or in the individual kingdom, the soul; that it has a life of its own, and will develop according to the law of its own being.

I. Consider this Parable of the Church :

i. Our LORD in His life on earth first sowed the seed, planted His Church, giving it the principle of divine life, and impressing upon it certain laws.

ii. The heavens then received Him until the consummation of all things, when He shall come again with the Holy Angels to gather in His Harvest.

iii. Often in the hour of the Church's apparent peril has the cry gone up to Him, "*Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down*" (Is., lxiv., 1); but He has left the Church, with His divine promise, to surmount all obstacles; and indeed it is being ripened, and developed, by the very storms which we dread so much.

II. Consider the Parable of the Soul :

i. The initial work is our LORD's, the gift of divine life, the call of the soul, the sowing of the seed.

ii. The summons into His presence at the moment of death, when He sees either that the soul is ripe for His garner, or that for it the day of grace has passed; the final work is also our LORD's.

iii. But the intermediate season, the life of struggle and fatigue, of night and day, of storm and sunshine; this is the leaving the spiritual life to be developed according to its own laws; so this parable should prepare us for those seasons of desolation, when we seem deserted by God.

III. Consider some of the lessons of the parable :

i. It is a lesson of encouragement as to the inherent vitality of the seed sown in our hearts, that no power from without can destroy it.

ii. That we are not to expect manifest divine interference just when we think it necessary, but that we are to be patient, and realize that slow progress is the law of spiritual life.

iii. That priests are to have faith in the seed they sow, and are not to be over-anxious about its growth, as though it were their work to keep it alive; they are to sow, and then go on with their other work, and leave it to God to give the increase.

Affections.—Realize the power of the Seed, the Word of God; pray for more trust in God; resolve to be patient.

SATURDAY AFTER FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE BLADE, THE EAR, AND THE FULL CORN.

"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—S. Mark, iv., 28.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the blossoms dying off the tree before the fruit can appear.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in GOD's service.

All spiritual writers agree that there are three distinct states in spiritual life; three stages in the journey heavenwards; S. Mark describes them in the words above.

I. Consider the first stage—*the blade*:

i. The state of first fervours, of beginnings; when we are full of enthusiasm, and find our satisfaction in religion; when we look for, and find, great visible results, manifested in our religious lives.

ii. The danger of this state is that we become too much occupied with results, being contented with the outward appearance, and so becoming superficial; resting in the means of grace, instead of their End.

iii. The need here is to look carefully into the inner life, and see if there be a real love of the Cross; to look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen.—(II. Cor., iv., 18.)

II. Consider the second stage—*the ear*:

i. This is the stage of temptation, and of progress; when we begin to feel the weary struggle pressing on us. It seems to be a time of standing still, it is really the great time of growth; though we must be careful that we do not mistake lukewarmness for that spiritual dryness with which GOD at this stage often tries the soul.

ii. The danger here is impatience with ourselves, and our temptations; weariness, despondency, and despair.

iii. The need is to realize how often we are warned against this. *"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."* (S. Matt., x., 22.) *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* (Rev., ii., 10.) *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation,"* &c. (S. James, i., 12.) *"We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God."* (Acts, xiv., 22.)

III. Consider the third stage—*the full corn in the ear*:

i. This is the state of sanctity, of perfection; it is seldom reached much this side of the grave, when temptation has done its work, and the Cross is welcomed and borne with love, and the sweet contentment of waiting for the coming of the LORD JESUS is realized.

ii. The danger of this stage is spiritual pride; it was in this stage that Moses sinned, that S. Peter fell.

iii. The need here is watchfulness, and humility; to remember S. Paul's warning, *"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* (I. Cor., x., 12.)

Affections.—Realize the length of the race-course of life; pray for endurance; examine where you stand now; resolve to watch against the dangers of your particular state.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE NATURE OF SIN.

"A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living."—S. Luke, xv., 11-12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the younger son making his shameless request.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from the spirit of selfishness.

In the first words of this parable our LORD leads us back from the manifestations of sin to its first principle, and shows us, not only what sin *does*, but what sin *is*, selfishness.

I. Consider selfishness as the principle of all sin:

i. Selfishness is distinct from proper self-love or justice. GOD commands us to love our neighbour *as* ourself, and thus proposes proper self-love as the pattern of love to others. Justice recognizes self as having rights and duties in common with others, for the Glory of GOD, and no more. The prodigal, by his claim, entirely ignores his father's rights and wishes.

ii. Selfishness, as seen in the younger son, is a spirit with no redeeming principle, ready to break the most sacred ties and obligations if they interfere with the indulgence of its wishes; thus he violates all ties of affection and duty by his request.

iii. Selfishness is the desire to possess *apart* from GOD, while the true duty of man consists in remaining nearer to GOD, and holding and using all things according to His Will. "*Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine*" (v. 31), but the prodigal asks that the inheritance may be *divided*. There is a portion of goods allotted to each by our Father—bodily constitution, rational soul, powers of mind, voice of conscience, and a higher spiritual nature by which we may have fellowship with the angels and GOD.

iv. Selfishness is the desire to live and act without GOD; so the prodigal took his departure into a far country; he removed himself as far as he could from all restraint.

v. Selfishness is self-assertion and self-confidence; in the younger son there is no humility or self-distrust, no doubt as to his own prudence or need of guidance.

vi. Selfishness, then, is self-deification; the exercise of free will to reject GOD, to ignore the rights of our fellow-men, to be absolute; and this is the very root and principle of sin.

II. Consider the importance of grasping the true nature of sin:

i. As the only test of progress; some think they are overcoming their sins, when they are only changing them; *e. g.*, when the spendthrift becomes a miser, or the lover of pleasure a lover of power.

ii. To show us that it is not enough that the outward life should be better, but that the heart must be right with GOD; self-dethroned, and GOD reigning; self-will given up, and GOD's Will lovingly accepted.

iii. As the only key to the mystery of the Cross, the symbol at once of CHRIST's work and of our salvation; self-denial is absolutely necessary to overcome the principle of sin, for the Cross is the only weapon which strikes at the root of sin.

Affections.—Realize how deeply rooted in our nature sin is; pray for grace really to struggle with self; resolve on some definite act of self-denial.

MONDAY AFTER SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LIFE OF SIN.

"And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."—S. Luke, xv., 13-17.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the Prodigal feeding the swine:

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a realization of the misery of sin.

I. Contemplate the departure from God:

i. *"Not many days after"*; not at once does the sinner break with God; there is an attempt for awhile to do the impossible, to serve the two Masters.

ii. *"Took his journey into a far country"*; soon even this restraint becomes unbearable, and the sinner wilfully throws off God's service, and a new longing springs up in his heart. *"Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"* (Ps., cxxxix., 7.) To get as far as possible from God becomes the aim of his life.

iii. All three parables in this chapter show us that there is a species of liberty, which does not belong to the life of sanctity, and which the sinner craves; this parable shows that this so-called liberty is indeed the most degrading slavery.

II. Consider the wastefulness of sin:

i. The effects of sin on the body may be seen in the drunkard and sensualist, in the prisons and hospitals of the land.

ii. The wounds of sin in the soul are not so easily recognized; but Memory, Intellect, Conscience, Will, all suffer; the affections are corrupted, the appreciation of innocent enjoyment blighted, and the heart hardened.

iii. The ravages of sin on the mind are seen most plainly in the lunatic asylum; quickly indeed is man's portion of goods wasted by sin.

III. Consider the destitution to which this waste leads:

i. *"When he had spent all"*; there is a time in the life of sin when its pleasures lose their sweetness, and the fact is forced upon the hungry soul that they cannot satisfy its cravings.

ii. *"He began to be in want"*; a result of the famine, which itself was caused by the waste. Good would it have been for him had he listened to the first cravings of his soul's hunger, for he would then have escaped the bitter and degrading slavery which still remained; but no, though he began to be in want, it was not till actually starving that he began to repent; one more downward step was possible, and that he took.

IV. Consider the slavery of sin:

i. The citizen to whom he joins himself may be taken for the devil, whose service he now openly accepts. He was still not a *citizen* of that land, but a foreigner in it; the devils, and those who have destroyed the faculty of penitence and so made themselves like devils, only they are citizens.

ii. *"He sent him into his fields to feed swine"*; this is the end of his boasted liberty. In the devil's fields supplying the demands of the passions, which no longer minister, as at first, to his gratification; no more pleasure, but degrading, grinding bondage.

iii. *"Filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat"*; not satisfying his hunger; and this the last stage in the life of sin, the last step in the downward progress of the soul.

Affections.—Make an act of contrition for all your sins; pray for grace to amend; resolve to make a special effort to conquer your besetting sin.

TUESDAY AFTER SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THE INSANITY OF SIN.

"And when he came to himself."—S. Luke, xv., 17.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a man suddenly awakening from some horrible dream.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be awakened from any delusion about your own sins.

I. Consider the crisis in the history of the Prodigal:

i. Between the two divisions of this parable, the life of sin and the life of penitence, is a strongly marked turning point, described by our LORD as *"coming to himself."*

ii. The first step in penitence is the realization of our condition, a conviction of our sin, an awakening from the illusion in which we were living, and a recognition, in all its misery and degradation, of our state; a coming to ourselves.

iii. When a man comes to himself, he soon comes to GOD; as in the other two parables in this chapter—as soon as the sheep is found he returns to the fold; as soon as the coin is discovered it returns to the place of safety provided by its owner; when the sinner sees what he is, he begins to remember what he might be, to recognize the powers of his nature, the end of his being, and he comes to GOD.

II. Consider sin as Insanity:

i. *"He came to himself,"* then before, he was beside himself, he was insane.

ii. *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."* (S. Luke, xxiii., 34.) Here our LORD recognizes the same principle, and on it bases His prayer of intercession, *"they know not what they do."* Sin is indeed insanity; the sinner knows not the results of sin on his own nature, much less the results of his sin in the Passion of JESUS.

iii. *"The dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet."* (II. Pet., ii., 16.) The same teaching, the madness of sin.

III. Consider the analogy between sin and insanity:

i. Almost every phase of insanity has a corresponding phase of sin; raving madness reminds us of the frenzy of passion; melancholy madness of the brooding over secret sin; imbecility of the foolish inexplicable sins which are so common; monomania of the one besetting sin found in many an otherwise strong character.

ii. Almost every sign of insanity may be detected in the sinner; the liability to strange illusions as to themselves, and others, which is a mark of insanity, e. g., thinking themselves great sovereigns, very rich, or in straitest poverty, looking upon their dearest friends as enemies, &c. ; so the prodigal mistakes a disgraceful bondage for a royal liberty, and thinks an indulgent Father a hard master.

iii. Another sign of madness is the neglect of the ordinary principles of human action; so the sinner neglects the seed time, and yet often hopes for a harvest; sows to the wind, without expecting to reap the whirlwind.

iv. Another mark of insanity is a weakened or perverted judgment, and is not the sinner blind to his own especial sin; and so we might trace the analogy into almost every detail.

Affections.—Realize the insanity of sin; pray that you may recognize the first symptom of this disease in yourself; resolve to be very searching in self-examination.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ESCAPE FROM SIN.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants."—S. Luke, xv., 17-20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Prodigal sitting on the ground reflecting.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of true penitence.

I. Consider the Prodigal's contrition :

i. A time of reflection precedes his actual repentance, a comparison of his own misery with the happy lot even of the hired servants in his father's house, a consideration of his sins.

ii. *"I perish with hunger!"* A sense of danger arouses him. Alas, for man's selfishness ! Too often it is so ; not the love of God, but a sense of his own misery is the spur which first impels the sinner to repentance.

iii. This, however, gives place to a more worthy sorrow, and at last to true contrition, as shown by its fruits.

II. Consider the Prodigal's confession :

i. Confession is one of the fruits of contrition ; all penitence is contained in contrition ; confession and satisfaction are simply the tests of contrition, and, where wanting, the proof that the contrition is imperfect.

ii. *"Father, I have sinned."* A father once, a father always ; as his obedience did not constitute the relation, so his disobedience cannot destroy it. In this word we may see that faith in God's love, that confidence in His readiness to pardon, which is a necessary disposition of heart to penitence.

iii. *"Against heaven, and before thee."* This is one of the principal signs of the reality of his contrition, that he recognizes his sin as directly against God ; so David, though his sins had been against the sixth and seventh Commandments, says, *"Against Thee only have I sinned."* (Ps., li., 4.) We injure ourselves, we wrong our neighbours, but, strictly speaking, we only sin against God ; and it is in the realization of this that true contrition is grounded.

III. Consider the Prodigal's satisfaction—*"Make me as one of thy hired servants"* :

i. A mark of humility ; contented with the lowest place, so that it may be in his father's house, and with the assurance of his father's pardon.

ii. A determination to accept cheerfully the temporal punishment of sin ; for though the guilt be remitted through penitence, the consequences in this world are not removed.

iii. Asking for a penance ; willing to bear his cross.

Affections.—Realize the need of sorrow for having offended God, as the basis of all true penitence ; pray for greater contrition ; resolve to accept cheerfully the punishment of your sins in this life.

THURSDAY AFTER SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ARK THE SEAT OF MERCY AND OF JUDGMENT.

"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony."—Exod., xxv., 21-22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Ark which GOD commanded to be made for the Tabernacle.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the Holy Communion may not bring guilt upon you to condemnation, but may intercede for you to your pardon and salvation.

I. Consider the Ark as a type of the Blessed Sacrament:

i. Externally composed of merely earthly elements, as the Bread and Wine in the Holy Eucharist before consecration; but, when the spirit of GOD has descended upon it, it becomes the appointed means by which GOD meets and communes with His people, only the type is less real than its anti-type; for the Bread and Wine become the Body and Blood of CHRIST, while the Ark only becomes the throne on which He rests.

ii. *"The Mercy Seat";* and yet it was also sometimes a seat of Judgment when profaned, as we may trace in its history; so the Holy Eucharist is to the faithful soul the Bread of Life, but to others the Bread of Condemnation.

II. Consider the Ark as the Seat of Judgment:

i. Among the Philistines, after its capture at Eben-ezer, treated without faith, put into an idol temple; the Philistines visited by disease and death.—I. Sam., v. With the men of Beth-shemesh, who looked into the Ark, giving way to irreverent curiosity; numbers of them perish.—I. Sam., vi., 19.

ii. Is not this what S. Paul tells us of the Blessed Sacrament? *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."* (I. Cor., xi., 30.) If he tells the Corinthians this was the result of their faithless and irreverent Communions, may it not be so among us now?

iii. The Ark brought back under the guidance of Uzzah.—II. Sam., vi. Uzzah touches, and instant death follows; a seat of judgment indeed! What was his sin? he did it for the best, to save the Ark from falling. GOD had given clear instructions how the Ark was to be moved, *"They shall not touch.....lest they die."* (Numb., iv., 15.) It was the neglect of this ritual which put the Ark in danger, and led Uzzah into the sin of irreverence, which was so severely punished. So the neglect of the proper ritual of the Altar has often put the Blessed Sacrament in danger, for, alas! it has fallen to the ground, and been trodden under foot! and has led those who neglect ritual into unintentional irreverence; still more may we apply this to the careless Communicant, who touches His LORD without observing the Church's instructions in the preparation of his soul.

III. Consider the Ark as the Seat of Mercy:

i. Throughout its history it was the means by which GOD dwelt with His people.

ii. In the house of Obed-edom,—a humble dwelling for the Ark, not like the Tabernacle or Temple; and yet reverent, loving care; and the reward, *"The Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household."* (II. Sam., vi., 11.) So, when He is in the house of our heart after a good Communion, will the LORD bless us, and our household, if we minister reverently and lovingly to our Guest.

iii. David learned a lesson from Uzzah, as the grand ritual, when he next attempted to bring the Ark in procession into the City of David, shewed.—I. Chron., xv., 15.

Affections.—Realize the danger of careless or irreverent familiarity; pray that you may never bring the Ark of the Covenant into an idol-temple, an impenitent heart; resolve to search your heart before your next Communion to see if there is any idol hidden there, as Rachel hid the idols in Jacob's household.

FRIDAY AFTER SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry."—S. Luke, xv., 20-24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the joyous meeting of the father and his penitent son.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may show your gratitude for God's forgiving love.

I. Consider the penitent's reception by his Father :

i. *"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him."* God discerns the first motions of penitence. He may have wandered far, and sinned grievously, but God discerns and blesses the first earnest desire to return, which springs up in the sinner's heart.

ii. *"And ran, and fell on his neck."* Wondrous mercy, fathomless love. Man is so unwilling to believe in his fellow-sinner's repentance, he must toil on for many a weary year before his fellow-man receives him back, and reinstates him in his old position. Not so God; if His poor erring child were doubting, now was the time to re-assure him.

iii. *"And kissed him."* The kiss, the sign of forgiveness and reconciliation, coming before his confession on the appearance of contrition in his heart, which God alone can see; but he does not the less go on to make his confession, though forgiven beforehand; had he not done so, it would have been a proof that his contrition was worthless.

II. Consider the office of the servants. God alone can forgive, but He has appointed His priests, in the Ministry of Reconciliation, to invest the penitent with those gifts, which are at once the assurance and result of absolution :

i. The Robe: the Righteousness of CHRIST, woven for him by the Passion of JESUS, imparted in the Sacraments, lost by sin, restored to him by Absolution.

ii. The Ring: a pledge of the HOLY GHOST, sealed with the Spirit of strength on his hand to preserve it from *deeds* of sin; or the sign that the penitent soul is again united to CHRIST, as His Bride.

iii. The shoes: *"Shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace"* (Eph., vi., 15); to keep him from the paths of sinners; *"to guide HIS feet into the Way of Peace."* (S. Luke, i., 79.)

III. Consider the Feast which the servants are to prepare for the penitent :

i. The Holy Communion; the Food of the soul; at last he finds that which can indeed satisfy his hunger.

ii. The companionship of those in his Father's house; the company of angels and saints, the Household of CHRIST, with whom we have fellowship in the Holy Eucharist.

iii. The joy of restoration enhanced by contrast with his late misery; a joy which is to pass into a deep, calm spirit of love.

IV. Consider the effects of God's love :

i. To deepen our penitence by the remembrance of what we were, and what God did for us.

ii. To prevent us from ever despairing.

iii. To help us in the hour of weakness, and temptation.

Affections.—Make acts of love and gratitude; pray that you may show forth God's praise, not only with your lips, but in your life; resolve on some act of thanksgiving.

SATURDAY AFTER SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ELDER BROTHER.

"And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."—S. Luke, xv., 28-32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Elder brother gazing in anger on the festive scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from the spirit of envy and jealousy.

The one note of painful discord here is the conduct of the Elder brother, and yet it was to present, to the murmuring Pharisees, this character, in all its repulsiveness, that the Parable was spoken.

I. Consider the Elder son's thoughts of his father :

i. There is no spirit of a son to be discerned, no love, merely the feelings of an hireling; he regards his father simply as a hard task master, as some do GOD.

ii. He accuses him of injustice, on exactly the same ground as the labourers in the parable of the Vineyard.—S. Matt., xx., 1-17. But the principle of God's Justice, no less than of His mercy, is Love; the object of God's love is the destruction of sin, not the punishment of the sinner, and sin being overcome by true penitence, the object is attained.

iii. There is a strongly marked spirit of ingratitude; if a son, then an heir—Rom., viii., 17; and so all things are his, “Son, all that I have is thine”; but no, he has the same desire that his brother had, to possess *apart* from GOD; the same spirit of selfishness.

II. Consider the Elder son's thoughts of his brother :

i. As there was no spirit of a son, so there is no trace of a brother's love, and this accounts for the absence of filial affection; for love of GOD and love of man are inseparable; for, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.” (I. S. John, iv., 20.) He has no love for his brother, and therefore no faith in him.

ii. He has no self-knowledge; and therefore no realization that he has the same evil nature, and that, but for grace, he might have fallen, just as his brother; a knowledge of self will always make us merciful to others.

iii. There is a most real difference, as the Father's words show, between the penitent and the child who has been true to grace; of such an one He says, “All that I have is thine”; of the penitent, all that I have is not his, he cannot regain all that he has lost, but it is meet that we should rejoice that he may regain something; there remains the penalty of a long, weary struggle with habits of evil, the sin forgiven, but the habit taking perhaps a life-time to conquer.

III. Consider the Elder son's thoughts of himself :

i. He is perfectly satisfied with himself; he takes as his standard his brother's life, and, comparing himself with him, feels that he is a saint.

ii. He thinks himself a perfect slave to his father's service; “These many years do I slave (*δουλεύω*) for thee”; are there not some who do practically regard GOD's service as slavery, and are perfectly contented, as the Pharisees were, with minute observance of the letter of the law, utterly regardless of the Spirit of Christianity.

iii. “Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment”; here is the key to the character, the principle of all sin, Selfishness; he thinks himself perfect, whereas he is eaten up with the spirit of selfishness, exactly one of those of whom our LORD speaks with loathing and abhorrence.

Affections.—Realize the danger of self-righteousness; pray for a spirit of filial love and trust; resolve never to compare yourself with your fellow-sinner, and to be very charitable to the penitent.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WAGES AND THE GIFT OF GOD.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." —
Rom., vi., 23.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD receiving into His Kingdom of everlasting life those who have served Him in this world.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize the responsibility of life here.

Two striking contrasts here, between death and life, between wages and a gift.

I. Consider the contrast between death and life:

i. (a.) What is death? As the separation of the soul from the body constitutes temporal death, by rendering the nature imperfect, by the dividing of these two parts, so the separation of the soul from GOD is eternal death.

(b.) Sin, as a necessary result, caused the death of the body by introducing that seed of decay, which resulted from the Fall; and sin, if unrepented of, will cause the death of the soul.

(c.) The soul in all its faculties tends to GOD. That desire to know can only be satisfied by knowing GOD; that passion to love can only be satisfied by loving GOD. Eternal death is the separation of the soul from the only object which can satisfy it, and for ever. The soul retains its powers, and they retain their desires, but the word "Depart" has separated them from their only End. As the soul without the body is imperfect, so human nature without GOD is imperfect, and this imperfection is Death, the wages of sin.

ii. (a.) What is life? A mystery which has eluded the scientist's knife. It is the gift of GOD, for it is a part, so to speak, of GOD, for GOD reveals Himself as the I AM, the Self-Existent Being.

(b.) The life of the body is caused by its union with the principle of life in the soul. The life of the soul is its union with GOD, in which it finds at once the attainment of its perfection, and the consummation of all its desires.

II. Consider the contrast between wages and a gift:

i. Wages is that which is ours of right, and by law, the result of our labour. So death is the wages of sin, not by the arbitrary sentence of an angry GOD, but the necessary result of sin, as cause and effect, the fulfilment of a moral law, as the law of physical death.

ii. A gift *may* follow a certain course of action, but not of necessity. Life is GOD's gift, a gift because we cannot claim it as the right of the creature, but which GOD loves to bestow; but it requires capacity in us to receive it. The work of our life here is to form that capacity.

Affections.—Realize the eternal result for good or evil of the actions of our every-day life; pray for grace to resist sin; resolve to labour in GOD's service.

MONDAY AFTER SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—S. Matt., xiii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Blessed LORD seeking your soul as the pearl of great price, to gain which He was content to suffer and to die.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for light to know the true value of your soul.

While this parable primarily sets forth the search of the soul for CHRIST, we may also see in it our LORD's own work in redeeming the soul. For He came into this world as the merchantman, seeking goodly pearls, the souls of men.

I. Consider the value of the soul; JESUS only can tell what that value is:

i. We may read it in His Passion; but those pains of body which He suffered were but a small part of the value of the soul; for His real Passion was not so much those outward sufferings as that sorrow which sits so easily on us, the sense of sin; that it was which brought the Blood from His Sacred Heart, and caused it to burst through every pore of His Most Holy Body, when He came in contact with our sin.

ii. We may read it in the Life of the Son of GOD; the object ever before Him your soul, the joy of finding it—*"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame."* (Heb., xii., 2.)

iii. We may read it in His Love; for He could not love an unworthy object; His Passion, His Life, might be from pity, but His Love tells what the value of the soul is. *One pearl tells of the individual love of GOD for ME, "Who loved ME, and gave Himself for ME."* (Gal., ii., 20.)

II. Consider some of the elements in which the value of the soul consists:

i. Its infinite capacity for either good or evil.

ii. Its immortality; like God Himself it cannot cease to be.

iii. Its place in heaven; itself the image of God, its end perfection.

III. Consider the value of the soul in other eyes:

i. In the sight of the angels; how they watch each soul, for they see in each the image of their King, the object of His Love! How they rejoice over a soul that repents! How they wonder at the little value we set on the soul!

ii. In the opinion of the devils; they look upon the soul as one of God's jewels, and they never relax in their efforts to ruin it. They recognize its value, and how they must wonder at us!

iii. In the view of the world; it values the soul at nothing; thinks far more of the body, more of the casket than of the jewel it contains; more even of the clothes the body wears, when soiled they are washed, when torn they are mended; but the soul may be stained and torn by sin, the blood flowing forth, the world cares not.

Affections.—Realize the value of your soul; pray that you may ever preserve it from sin; resolve to examine its present condition.

TUESDAY AFTER SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TREASURE OF THE SOUL.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—S. Matt., xiii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the merchantman earnestly seeking for the goodly pearl.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace so to hunger and thirst after righteousness that you may be filled.

Our Blessed LORD, having sought and found us, tells us to go and do likewise, and leaves us, that we may seek and find Him.

I. Consider the merchantman :

i. This man is no ordinary soul, but an earnest seeker after the good, beautiful, and true.

ii. He has found other pearls before, but goes on searching till he finds the *"one pearl of great price."* So we find many good things in life, natural virtues, &c., but we must persevere till we find CHRIST, and learn to know Him in all the fulness of His revelation. As we look back upon our life, may we not see how we have been finding better and better pearls, till at last, in the Church, in the Blessed Sacrament, we found the ONE PEARL, and rested gratefully satisfied.

iii. We may see this merchantman in many of the saints, but most strikingly in S. Augustine. The parable is a summary of his history: groping in the darkness, earnestly searching after truth, and gradually advancing to its discovery, and then giving up all that he might possess it.

II. Consider the pearl :

i. The pearl, during its formation hidden in its silver-lined house, is a type of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

ii. In its glittering home reflecting each prismatic colour, it is like CHRIST in our souls; the oyster dies, and drops off, and the pearl is left; so death will be the falling off of our lower nature, and the soul will be left a member of CHRIST. All that has not by the work of grace been assimilated to Him will then be rejected; but if life's work has been well done, He will have sanctified our whole nature.

iii. CHRIST, the Pearl, enters the soul, and by His work there makes the soul so one with Him that it becomes a pearl, a CHRIST. *"Unctus, es Christus."*

III. Consider the search :

i. It must be diligent, and thorough; the pearl is not gained by the superficial, not by fishing on the sea-shore, but by diving fearlessly into the deep; so with CHRIST, He is not to be found, whether in the Sacraments, or in the Bible, or in the spiritual life, except by those who are thorough in their search.

ii. There is a passion of HAVING in the heart of man; it has always been so. Before the Fall it was satisfied by GOD; now, it is either a craving and searching for earthly possessions, or for JESUS CHRIST; for vanity, or reality; for the creature, or the Creator; for worthless things, or the Pearl.

iii. There is a joy of finding and possessing, the reward of toilsome searching; the joy of having CHRIST in meditation, and Communion, as the Treasure of the Soul.

Affections.—Realize that there is but one thing that can satisfy the soul, the possession of CHRIST; pray for grace diligently to seek for Him; resolve to let all that is good, and beautiful, and true in this life lead you on to Him, Who is All Goodness, Beauty, and Truth.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SURRENDER OF CREATURES.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—S. Matt., xiii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Blessed LORD stripping Himself of all things, and dying in absolute poverty.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of detachment.

I. Consider the words, *"went and sold all that he had, and bought it"*:

i. This was what JESUS, the Merchantman of souls, did for me; He emptied Himself of His glory, and took upon Him the form of a slave, that He might find my soul.

ii. Our Blessed LORD, the owner of all, being in this world, gradually put aside all; in His poverty He had not where to lay His Head; ere His Death He is stripped of all things, His Clothes, His Friends, His Mother, and lastly, even of the consolation of His Father's Presence.

iii. And I, when I find Him, must follow His Example, and, setting aside all else, make Him the one treasure of my soul.

II. Consider that one of the purposes for which creatures are given us is that they may be surrendered:

i. They are given that we may have something to sacrifice. Just as a parent gives his child money, and allows that child, out of that money, to give him some present, as a token of love; so our Heavenly Father gives us things in this life to be sacrificed.

ii. We cannot advance a single step in the spiritual life without its costing us something: friends, love, position, money, ambition, &c.; and every step we take in the narrow way, the ground is strewn with the creatures we have had to cast away; like the march of a retreating army through a hostile country, our *"impedimenta"* cast away, that we may get out of this country, this world, more quickly.

iii. As the Voice of GOD sounded of old amid the trees of the Garden of Eden, calling Adam, so now it sounds amid the creatures, calling us to follow it through the world, while the creatures try to detain us by their attractions, calling us to stay and use them; ah! their true use is often their non-use.

III. Consider how our Heavenly Father is mercifully and gently leading us by the ordinary discipline of life to learn this law of detachment:

i. In childhood; our first effort at detachment, leaving home for school; the next, leaving school, and surrendering all the sweet and innocent friendships we formed there.

ii. In manhood; in family life losses by death, father, mother, &c.; in married life, losing children, either by death, or marriage, or the claims of work calling them away from us.

iii. In old age; having to give up the work we loved to younger men; being tempted to feel that we are a burden, even to our best friends; until the happy moment comes, when we are called on to make the last effort of detachment, and when detached from our troublesome self, we are attached to the Body of CHRIST in Paradise.

Affections.—Realize the universality of the law of detachment; pray that you may cheerfully surrender what GOD takes away; resolve to examine whether you are too greatly attached to any creature now.

THURSDAY AFTER SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SHEWBREAD.

"And thou shalt set upon the table Shewbread before me alway."—Ex., xxv., 30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the priests on every Sabbath renewing the Shewbread.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the Presence of our LORD in your soul through your Sunday Eucharist may remain with you through the week.

I. Consider the names by which the Shewbread is called:

i. Shewbread: this word in the original means "Bread of the Face," and signifies that bread through which God is seen, *i. e.*, in the participation of which man attains the sight of God; so may we in the Holy Eucharist with the eye of faith behold the Presence of our LORD, and in its participation transfer that presence to our own souls.

ii. The Continual bread: (Numb., iv., 7) so called because from the supply set upon the golden table every Sabbath it was perpetually present before God. So CHRIST having offered one *continual sacrifice* for sins ($\thetaυσίαν\ εἰς τὸ διηνεκές$), sat down at the Right Hand of God. (Heb., x., 12.) The sacrifice of the Eucharist is a perpetual sacrifice, not repeated in each Eucharist, but continuous.

II. Consider what this offering was composed of:

i. Fine Flour: like the unleavened bread used in the Holy Eucharist.
ii. It was accompanied by a libation of wine, typifying the other element in the Eucharist, the wine.

III. Consider the Rites accompanying the offering of the Shewbread:

i. The Frankincense (Lev., xxiv., 7); the symbol of prayer (Ps., cxli., 2); the Holy Eucharist is the special time for prayer.

ii. The Shewbread being a meat offering (Lev., xxiv., 7), was accompanied by a libation (Ex., xxv., 29), symbolizing the outpouring of CHRIST's Blood; and that with the oblation of the Eucharist we offer "ourselves, our souls and bodies," that we are ready to spend and be spent for Him. (Phil., ii., 17.)

iii. The Cloth of Scarlet: The table of Shewbread alone had a covering of scarlet, a symbol of protection by the Blood of CHRIST.

iv. The Shewbread was always before the LORD, but it was renewed every Sabbath—figuring thereby the weekly Eucharist, which is the Church's rule, and yet that the Presence abides with us always, lasting, if we have grace to retain it, from one Communion till the next.

Affections.—Realize the Sacramental Presence of CHRIST which ought to abide in your soul always; pray Him to remain with you; resolve often to retire within yourself to commune with your Heavenly Guest.

FRIDAY AFTER SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—S. Matt., xiii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the merchantman gazing with delight on the one pearl of great price.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may leave nothing undone in the work of penitence.

I. Consider the Pearl as the emblem of purity:

i. There was no characteristic of the pearl on which the Fathers more loved to dwell than its purity; there is no characteristic of the soul on which its own happiness, and its value in God's Eyes, more depends than purity.

ii. Every flaw found in the pearl spoils it, and reduces its value; so every sin is a flaw in the soul, which, if not removed now in time by penitence, will mar the soul for eternity.

iii. How many souls there are, otherwise goodly pearls indeed, which are ruined by the flaws of unrepented sin! Noble in their nature, glorious in their gifts, but spoiled by their sins!

II. Consider the need of watching the soul in its growth:

i. Therefore regular and searching self-examinations to detect the first signs of evil.

ii. And careful avoidance of every dangerous tendency which may be discovered.

iii. And diligent and, if necessary, painful eradication of all flaws of sin recognized in the character.

III. Consider the purification of penitence:

i. Everything depends on our penitence; our love of God, our sight of God, our work for God, and His work in us by grace.

ii. It is the only means of removing the evil which self-examination has revealed; and the tears of penitence will do more towards its removal, and the purification of the soul, than all the efforts of energetic work.

iii. We must therefore examine our Contrition, our Confessions, our Satisfaction, to see if they are what they might be, if they are our best; our LORD seeks GOODLY PEARLS, and we must shrink back from no step of self-denial or penitence which may make us more meet for His Kingdom.

Affections.—Realize the need of purity of soul before we can enter heaven; pray for a real knowledge of your sins; resolve on some definite act of penitence.

SATURDAY AFTER SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SOUL.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—S. Matt., xiii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the soul entering the body, as a germ capable of infinite development either towards good or evil.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to accept with patience and thankfulness all those disciplines which God's Providence sends, and to regard them as the means of developing your soul.

The account of the formation of the pearl is a marvellous picture of the soul's history here.

I. Consider the formation of the pearl:

i. It grows, hidden away beneath the waves of the sea, in the rough looking oyster; so the soul of man is formed, beneath the waves of this world's life, hidden in the material body.

ii. It is formed to resist the aggression of foreign substances, which have got within the shell of the oyster, and which cause it annoyance; so the soul is moulded by forces foreign to itself acting upon it.

iii. Its shape and size, and therefore value, depends upon the substance which it has to resist; so the soul depends for its development upon its struggles in this world.

II. Consider the forces which develope the soul :

i. Temptations to sin; the attacks of a foreign foe which irritate, and, if we use the grace given us to resist, gradually cause the contrary virtues to be formed in us, e. g., patience by resisting temptations to irritability, purity by evil thoughts, prayer by coldness and wanderings. We often murmur at our temptations, instead of realizing that they are absolutely necessary for the development of those faculties, which will be our glory in heaven, each struggle having its own especial reward.

ii. Crosses; in some parts divers make the oysters produce larger pearls by dropping into them pieces of iron, &c. These worry the poor fish, and cause the formation of the largest pearls; so the Cross in our life, given us by the Hand of Him by Whom and for Whom the soul was created, and Who seeks GOODLY PEARLS. Other gems are formed for the most part from inorganic, or decayed organic matter, but the pearl by the sufferings of animal life.

iii. Grace; this force, acting from within, enables the soul to meet and endure its temptations and crosses. Without it the soul would be crushed by them; with it they do but cause its growth.

III. Consider the growth of the soul :

i. It almost all depends on the little while we are here. There are souls in Paradise who have been there 1,800 years, but how little changed in that time, compared with the few years of this life. Here they were formed, there purified, but the form remains unchangeable.

ii. The pearl gradually increases unmoved amid the vicissitudes of the oyster's life, and, as it grows, takes into itself the necessary nacreous deposits from the fish, and makes its house resplendent with a pearly coating; so the soul grows amid the trials of daily life, taking from the lower nature all those faculties which it can appropriate in the resurrection life, and making the body, as well as the soul, brilliant with the results of the discipline of earth.

iii. The oysters are heaped up on the shore, and left to die, and decay away, and the pearl is found shining brightly; so the body, worn out by the toils and disciplines of earth, dies, decays, falls off, and the soul is left to be purified in Paradise, till that day when it passes into the Beatific Vision. *"And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."* (Mal., iii., 17.)

Affections.—Realize the true office of the trials of this life; pray for grace to endure all temptations; resolve to use all means of grace within your reach.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

“Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.”—S. Matt., vii, 20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a tree laden with fruit.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may bring forth the fruit of good works to the glory of GOD.

I. Consider what the fruit of a tree is:

i. It is the resultant of the forces of its own nature, acted upon by all other forces with which it has come in contact, the result of storm and sunshine, heat and cold.

ii. It is the manifestation of the nature of the tree; the leaf and blossom of various trees may be somewhat alike, but the fruit of each is different.

iii. It is developed from within according to the laws of its own being; it is the production and purpose of the life of the tree.

II. Consider this, as our LORD proposes, as a test of Christianity in comparison with other religions:

i. The two other great religions of the world are Mahomedanism and Buddhism; what have they done for the world? the world owes no debt of gratitude to them. Its treatment of women bars the claims of the first, the second in its practical annihilation of man's individuality confesses its inability to help him.

ii. Science and morality claim to-day to be man's benefactors; the first has attempted, and sometimes alas! successfully, to loose man's hold on the rock of faith, but without giving him any other resting-place; the latter is but the outcome of Christianity, and its teachings would be impossible without it.

iii. What are the fruits of Christianity? Not what they ought to be, but yet unique in the history of the world; all the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions of the world; there was not one before CHRIST; the purity of home life; the emancipation of slavery; above all, the restoration of woman to her true position and dignity in the world.

III. Consider this as a test of each individual Christian:

i. Nowhere in the Bible is there any question as to our feelings; the wild tree brings forth sometimes more luxuriant foliage than the fruit-bearing tree, for all its strength goes into its foliage.

ii. It is not enough to judge a man by his words; the tongue is the interpreter of the mind, not of the heart; the phraseology of Christianity is often but the cloak for sin.

iii. It is by our acts, by the fruits of our lives, that we are to be known both now and hereafter.

Affections.—Realize the strictness of the judgment of GOD; pray that by co-operation with grace your life may be a fruitful one; resolve on some definite good act that you will do.

MONDAY AFTER EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE UNITY OF THE PEARL.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—S. Matt., xiii., 45-46.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Blessed LORD, in His great intercession, pray for the unity of His Church.—(S. John, xvii., 21-24.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of sanctity.

I. Consider the oneness of the pearl:

i. One of the characteristic differences between the pearl and other precious stones is its unity; other gems are cut to show their brilliancy, but by this lose their oneness; the pearl, if cut, is spoiled.

ii. The pearl, when the oyster dies, has an individual completeness and beauty; no graver's tool can add anything to it.

iii. The pearl may perhaps pass from its humble home in the oyster to the crown of a king; it needs no polishing, no artificial preparation; it is perfect in itself.

II. Consider the unity of individual life:

i. A life may comprise many years, many changes of scene and circumstances around, many changes of the chemical atoms which make up the material body, yet the child and the old man are the same, there is but the one life.

ii. The character is the sum of all the forces of life, which have acted upon the individual, the resultant of many an action, and yet it is but one. Each has his individual character, no two are quite alike; thus we see there is a unity and completeness in each individual life.

iii. In heaven there will be a oneness and completeness of individual joy; while taken into the very Being, drinking in the very Life of GOD, this union with God will be without any loss of individuality.

III. Consider the unity of the saints in the Body of CHRIST:

i. The oneness of that mystic Body of CHRIST, the Church of GOD; many members, infinite variety among the saints, no two quite alike, and yet perfect unity.

ii. One life circulating through the whole Body, the life of the HOLY GHOST; a perfect unity of interest and fellowship.

iii. This union is continuous, and yet there is one act by which *now* it is consummated, the reception of the Holy Eucharist; then we have Communion, not only with GOD, but with the whole Body of CHRIST, time and space are annihilated, and for that moment we realize what the life of heaven will be, the unity of the saints in the Body of CHRIST.

Affections.—Realize the oneness of the soul with GOD; pray that by greater sanctity you may attain to a closer fellowship with the Body of CHRIST; resolve that in your next Communion you will think more of this fellowship with the saints.

TUESDAY AFTER EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PEARL IN ITS PLACE IN HEAVEN.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl."—Rev., xxi., 21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the City of God, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of final perseverance.

I. Consider the moment of the general resurrection:

i. The rising of the body; not one action of life but has left its mark on that body; the marks, alas! of many a sin, and, by God's grace, of many an act of penitence.

ii. The soul uniting itself for ever with that risen body; the soul will take up all that has been sanctified by grace, and reject all else; take up all those faculties which have been developed here; just as in the pearl the fish dies and decays, but there is in the pearl itself all of that material body which it has been able to assimilate during the life of the oyster, and the rest passes away.

iii. Then comes the general judgment of soul and body; it will not be an arbitrary sentence, but, like God's judgments here, the working out of a law; the physical laws of God work out their results here. That judgment will be the working out of the moral law of our lives, and these results, unlike those of physical laws which pass away, will be eternal.

II. Consider the results of the discipline of earth:

i. In the preparation of the pearl for a special place in heaven; "*every several gate was of one pearl.*" As in the building of Solomon's Temple, the great type of Heaven, there was no sound of any tool heard in the House (I. Kings, vi., 7), but all was prepared at a distance, the stones shaped, &c., and brought and fitted into their places, and any that did not fit rejected; so with the soul, we are being prepared now by the discipline of earth for the special place in that great city, marked out for us by the predestination of God, and, if we do not rise up to the purposes of God, and prepare to fill that place, we must be rejected.

ii. In the development of a special beauty; each of those precious stones, with which the foundations of the walls of heaven were garnished (Rev., xxi., 19), had its own special beauty of colour, and that beauty was the result of the action of the forces of this world upon it; so the special glory of each soul in heaven will be the result of the struggles of that soul on earth; the struggle with some sin we loathed forming an element of beauty, which without it would have been wanting.

iii. In the formation of a capacity for special joy; we shall not only be objects of beauty in the sight of God, but as the colours of precious stones in reality are the results of their capacity for absorbing or refracting certain light rays, so each will have his own capacity for drinking in the Light, the Life, the Love of God.

III. Consider some lessons which this teaches us:

i. The place of the pearl was the gateway; our place in heaven is not a future thing, but is fixed from all eternity by God; and we have to be prepared for it by our life now. How sad to be intended for the place of the pearl, and to fall short of the purity of the pearl, and so to forfeit that place!

ii. The merchantman is seeking goodly pearls now; we must shrink from no cross, hold back from no sacrifice, that may make us goodly pearls; nay, if it be His purpose for us, "*the one pearl of great price,*" for which our Lord sold all.

Affections.—Realize the responsibility of every act of life; pray that you may not fall short of God's purpose for you; resolve so to accept the cross your Lord gives you in this life that you may form a fair gem in His Kingdom in eternity.

WEDNESDAY AFTER EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SPIRITUAL RESERVE.

"Neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."—S. Matt., vii., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying to the cleansed leper, *"See thou tell no man."* (S. Matt., viii., 4.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for spiritual reserve, wisdom, and reverence in speaking of holy things.

I. Consider the danger of irreverence in speaking of holy things:

i. One of the sins of good people often is the freedom with which they talk of holy things, the familiarity with which they speak of the most solemn mysteries of the faith; how different the early Christians were! they regarded such things as too sacred to be imparted to any but believers.

ii. By our words we bring the forces of our soul to bear on other souls, and reveal ourselves to others. Unrestrained speech is essentially the dissipation of the forces of the soul.

iii. Nothing can be clearer than our LORD's repeated injunction as to reserve in talking about God's work in our souls. It may be summed up in the words of the text, which have passed into a proverb, often quoted, more often disregarded.

II. Consider the proverb, *"Cast not your pearls," &c.:*

i. Your pearls; holy truths, spiritual gifts and graces, sacred mysteries; last, but not least, your soul. The pearl is a type of the soul, and often in casting God's gifts before those who misuse them, *e. g.*, by talking unrestrainedly about holy things, we do so pour out our soul, that we are casting it into the power of the enemy.

ii. The swine; those who, from habits of worldliness or sin, have so blunted their moral nature that they have no more appreciation of holy things than swine have of precious gems.

iii. The result is twofold:

(a.) *"They trample them under their feet"*; desecration and profanation of what we love and reverence; and whose fault? Often our own for talking so much about the Church, and its doctrines, and individuals and works in it, in which we are interested.

(b.) *"And turn again and rend you"*; petty persecution and annoyances, temptations to irritability, continual attacks, which worry, and often injure your spiritual life, by sins of impatience, &c., and your own fault for bringing the subject up.

III. Consider the remedy:

i. The cultivation of that Spirit of Holy Fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, and the first step to the other gifts of the Spirit; a Holy Fear, which forbids talking lightly of sacred things, which shrinks from speaking of God's dealings with us; a reverence and love which teaches us to avoid such subjects as would not be appreciated by the hearers.

ii. Holy Fear will lead to self-restraint and reserve, especially in speech, which will deliver us from many difficulties and dangers, and will be one of the most important elements of growth in prayer, meditation, and a devout frequenting of the Sacraments.

iii. Spiritual reserve will save both ourselves and others from many sins.

Affections.—Realize the danger of unrecalled speech; pray for the Spirit of Holy Fear; resolve to examine yourself as to your religious conversations.

THURSDAY AFTER EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GIDEON'S BARLEY CAKE.

"And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along."—Judges, vii., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Gideon listening to the dream.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in the might of your Communions you may overcome all your foes.

I. Consider what the cake of barley bread signified—barley bread is the poorest sort of bread, common, and despised :

i. Of course it referred primarily to Gideon ; who said, "*Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*" (Judg., vi., 15.)

ii. Our LORD ; the Living Bread. He was poor and despised, made least in His Father's House, *i. e.*, lower than the angels, and by His coming into the world He overthrew the hosts of the enemy.

iii. Especially the Holy Eucharist ; where CHRIST is present in all the power of His grace under the humble species of bread ; the paschal wave sheaf too was of barley, the type of CHRIST's risen Body ; and it is this glorious risen Body that we receive in the Eucharist.

II. Consider this as a prophecy of the history of the Church, and of the position and work of the Holy Eucharist in the Church :

i. In the age of persecutions what gave the martyrs their strength ? their Communions. (Remember the way in which the Bread of Life was often conveyed to them in their prisons.)

ii. In the heresies which have assaulted and endeavoured to poison the very food of life, it has been, especially in modern times, the Holy Eucharist which has been at once the object of attack, and our strength.

iii. Infidelity, puffed up with pride, thinking to overthrow the Faith by its arguments, has found itself again and again powerless against the simple faith of perhaps some poor peasant in the Holy Eucharist ; so humble in its appearance, so invincible in its might.

III. Consider this as a type of our own experience now :

i. In the hour of temptation, when the hosts of Midian camp against us, it is in the strength of the Corn of the Mighty that we must overcome them.

ii. In the time of sorrow, when the Cross bears heavily on us, it is in the power of the Bread of Angels that we learn to say "*Thy will be done....as it is in heaven.*"

iii. In the season of despondency, when like Gideon our work seems too great for us, "*Go in this thy might*" (Judges, vi., 14) is spoken in our hearts as we leave the Altar ; this thy might, the might of our Communion.

Affections.—Realize the loving condescension of our LORD in veiling His majesty under these humble forms ; make an act of faith in the power of the Holy Eucharist—*"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil., iv., 13) ; pray for a more trustful reliance on the grace of the Sacraments.

FRIDAY AFTER EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his Vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."—S. Luke, xiii., 6-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD speaking this parable to those who were talking about their neighbours' misfortunes.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may plenteously bring forth the fruits of good works.

I. Consider the work of our LORD set forth here:

i. He has planted a fig tree in His Vineyard; your own soul in the Vineyard of His Church.

ii. He comes seeking fruit; there are three kinds of fruit spoken of in the Bible, which our souls produce: (a.) **GOOD WORKS**, which are the outcome of the inner life, when the tree having been made good bears fruit after its own kind; (b.) **DEAD WORKS**—Heb., ix., 14, fair in outward appearance, but not the outgrowth of the inner life, but fruit, as it were, fastened on externally; alms given to be appreciated by men, prayers made to be seen of men; (c.) **WICKED WORKS**—I. S. John, iii., 12; Rom., xiii., 12; Gal., v., 19, when the corrupt tree bears its natural fruit. Our LORD seeks only the first; which are the fruits He finds in us?

iii. *"Behold these three years....why cumbereth it the ground?"*; to his hearers the "three years" was an allusion to His own Ministry; to us it tells that there is a last call; "*cumbereth*," lit., impoverisheth (*καταργεῖ*); a barren tree is mischievous, for it sterilizes the ground; so a barren life.

II. Consider the Work of the HOLY GHOST here:

i. The vine dressers are many, all the Ministers of God, but all are but the instruments of One, the HOLY GHOST, Whose work it is to sanctify the elect.

ii. *"Let it alone this year also."* Here we see the Intercessory Office of the HOLY SPIRIT (*ό παράκλητος*) pleading with man, and for man, until quenched by man's obduracy.—I. Thess., v. 19.

iii. *"Till I shall dig about it, and dung it."* A multiplication of calls and opportunities of grace often marking the last period of probation.

III. Consider some further lessons:

i. *"If it bear fruit, well."* Well indeed for the sinner, for that fruit shall be stored in God's treasure house.—S. Matt., vi., 20.

ii. *"If not,....thou shalt cut it down."* THOU it is the Office of the Son to judge—S. John, v. 22; and there is a limit to the time of grace.

iii. This parable illustrates the teaching which precedes, viz.: that the calamities of others are calls to you, the voice of the Son saying, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (vv. 3 and 4).

Affections.—Gratitude for God's patience with you; pray that you may co-operate with the HOLY GHOST; resolve to live as though this were your last year of opportunity.

SATURDAY AFTER EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE DRAW NET.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."—S. Matt., xiii, 47-48.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the slow process of dragging the net through the sea.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your life may stand the test of the last Judgment.

This is the last of this series of Parables, taking in the two classes of scenery—the land and sea—of the others, and giving the conclusion and consummation of all. It refers, like all of them, primarily to the Church, but may be taken also for the individual soul.

I. Consider the picture of this life :

i. The net ; ($\sigma\alpha\gamma\eta\nu\gamma$, a seine or draw net) the soul's life here.

ii. The sea ; the waters of this troublesome world.

iii. The dragging of the net ; the dragging of the net of our life day by day slowly through the world, enclosing every action of life, good and bad.

II. Consider the picture of the other world :

i. *"When it was full;"* not until life is completed, and all its actions have worked out their results ; the account is not complete at the moment of death, for both our good and bad deeds go on in their results till the last great day.

ii. *"They drew to shore;"* the shores of eternity, where JESUS stands to welcome His own.—(S. John, xxi, 4.)

iii. Then comes the scrutiny ; its judicial character is expressed by the sitting down ; every action will have its result in that day, the result of many a struggle, many a sin, and by God's grace many a victory ; each act will be examined at the General Judgment.

III. Consider the principal lessons of the Parable :

i. The hiddenness of the work now ; beneath the waters of the world's life the soul's future is being formed.

ii. The certainty of the final separation ; only the good acts of our life, only those faculties of our nature, which have been sanctified by grace and developed here, can be gathered into the vessel of the resurrection body there ; all else rejected ; with some, alas, all rejected.

iii. The necessity of realizing the solemnity and importance of each moment of life, as having its result in eternity.

Affections.—Realize the strictness of the Judgment ; pray for grace to prepare now for it ; resolve on some good act which you can do to-day.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE UNJUST STEWARD, I.

"Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed."—S. Luke, xvi., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Steward realizing that his stewardship is drawing to a close, and considering how he can best prepare to meet the future.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that we may so live in this transitory world that we may be received into the everlasting habitations of the Saints.

No other parable has been the subject of so much controversy, no other presents so much difficulty in the interpretation of its details, and yet no doubt whatever as to the great lessons which it is intended to teach.

I. Consider the scope and purpose of the parable:

i. Its imagery is purely worldly; the lord, the steward, and the debtors are all children of this world; the whole transaction is regarded entirely from their standpoint; it is a fair picture of the ways of the world.

ii. There is no commendation of the steward's *dishonesty by our Lord*, but a statement that the children of this world are towards their generation (*i. e.*, towards this world) more prudent than the children of the light are towards theirs (*i. e.*, towards eternity).

iii. Our LORD's application of the parable teaches us that we may elicit good out of the evil we see around us, and make even the children of Mammon teach us how we should serve GOD.

II. Consider some of the lessons taught:

i. Foresight in regard to the future: we may separate a man's energy from his unscrupulousness, and, contemplating them apart, praise the one and condemn the other; so our LORD disentangles the steward's dishonesty from his foresight, and proposes the latter as an example.

ii. Meditation on the hopes of eternity: knowing that our stewardship must come to an end, like this steward, seriously to consider what can I do to prepare for the future? how best can I use this transitory life that it may lead me to the everlasting habitations of the blessed?

iii. Faithfulness in the present: this was the virtue in which the steward was strikingly wanting, and so it is especially inculcated by our LORD in an appendage to the parable (v., 10-12), thus answering the objection that dishonesty is proposed for our imitation.

III. Consider the explanation of some of the apparent difficulties here:

i. It is not the dishonesty, but the energy and forethought of the steward which is proposed for our example; to be at least as earnest about eternity as the worldly are about the present.

ii. It is not *our* LORD, but his own lord who, from the world's standpoint, praises the steward for his shrewdness.

iii. They who receive us into everlasting habitations are those whom we have helped on earth, and who are on the Right Hand at the last, and they only are spoken of as representing our LORD, as explained in the words, "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*" (S. Matt., xxv., 40.)

Affections.—Realize the need of foresight in regard to eternity; pray that you may profit by the lessons of this parable; resolve to be more diligent in your work for GOD.

MONDAY AFTER NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE UNJUST STEWARD, II.

“ Give an account of thy stewardship ; for thou mayest be no longer steward.”—S. Luke, xvi., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Picture yourself listening to the accusation brought against you by Satan.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so keep your account that you may be ready to render it when GOD calls you.

I. Consider the chief persons of the parable :

i. The Rich Man : Our LORD is the only Rich Man ; all others here are but stewards ; He is the owner of all. Those whom the world calls rich men are only those whose responsibility is increased.

ii. The Steward : The name is not given, that each may write his own name here.

iii. The Accuser : (*διάβολος* from *διαβάλλω*, the word used here is *διεβλήθη* ; it implies a malicious accusation, but not a false one.) So called because of the work in which he is always engaged.

II. Consider when the account is to be given :

i. At the day of the General Judgment, when the throne will be set up, and the books opened, and all will be present to hear.—(Rev., xx., 11-14.)

ii. At the Particular Judgment, immediately after death.—(S. Luke, xvi., 22-23.) The Accuser will be there, but not the spectators.

iii. Now, every day, there is a judgment, to which the Psalmist refers. GOD judgeth the righteous, and GOD is angry with the wicked, every day.—(Ps. vii., 12.)

III. Consider the duty of Self-Examination : if we are to give an account, we must keep an account :

i. General Examination : Of the sins of my whole life, or of some considerable portion of my life, to be made at seasons of special solemnity ; as in Lent, for instance, it is good to examine since the last Lent, to see whether, on the whole, I am advancing or losing ground.

ii. Particular Examination : Of one special sin, in its rise and growth, that I may know whether I am conquering it, or it is overcoming me.

iii. Daily Examination : How can I “*lay me down in peace, and take my rest*” (Ps. iv., 9) until I have examined my conscience, and asked GOD to forgive what has been amiss during the day.

Affections.—Realize the importance of Self-Examination ; pray that you may have light to see yourself as GOD sees you ; resolve to be more careful in this duty, and to make a special examination of this day before retiring to-night.

TUESDAY AFTER NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ACCUSATION.

"There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods."—S. Luke, xvi., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Picture to thyself thy guardian angel gazing sadly upon all the wasted opportunities of thy life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for light to realize more the responsibility of life.

I. Consider that man is the eldest servant in His Master's House, His steward. The duty of a steward is to *use* the goods committed to him with discretion, as one who must give account. In this office there are two dangers:

- i. The danger of forgetting that we are stewards, and so using things as though they were our own.
- ii. The danger of forgetting that we are responsible for the *improvement* of what is committed to us, acting more as slaves than stewards, like the man who hid his LORD's money in the earth (S. Matt., xxv., 25).

II. Consider the accusation:

- i. He was not, in the first place, accused of dishonesty. How many are priding themselves on the avoidance of sins of commission.
- ii. He was accused of carelessness, of wasting what was not his. This teaches us that we must answer for our sins of omission; not only for the wrong we have done, but for the good we have left undone, as in the parable of the sheep and the goats (S. Matt., xxv., 31-46).

III. Consider some of the goods which we may be accused of wasting:

- i. Goods of Nature: of body, life, and health; of mind, ability, knowledge; of soul, virtues, and faculties.
- ii. Goods of Estate: money, influence, example.
- iii. Goods of Grace: Sacraments, prayer, calls and opportunities given us by GOD.

Affections.—Make an act of contrition for all your sins of carelessness; pray for diligence; resolve to be more faithful in the discharge of the duties of life.

WEDNESDAY AFTER NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.—THE USE OF RICHES.

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—S. Luke, xvi., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD joyfully welcoming the faithful steward at the last day.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may make friends in heaven of the goods committed to your care on earth.

I. Consider the expression, “*Mammon of unrighteousness*,” as applied to riches:

i. Riches are justly called “unrighteous,” as belonging to a state of things brought about and rendered necessary by sin. In all individual wealth a principle of evil is implied, for, when a perfect state of society was realized in the moment of the Church’s first love, they had all things common.—(Acts, iv., 32.)

ii. We are commanded to use this Mammon of unrighteousness, and therefore we are not to strive to alter this state of things, to attempt which has ever proved one of the most fruitful sources of mischief in the world, because it is ignoring the fact that this is a *sinful* world, and we might as well ignore any other result of sin, such as pain, disease, death; our duty is to recognize these things as necessary results of a sinful world, and so to act in regard to them.

iii. We are to recognize the danger and temptation of riches.

II. Consider that we are not to *serve* Mammon (*i.e.*, to become its slaves); “*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*” (v. 13):

i. By setting our hearts on riches when we have them, and so letting our heart become hardened by the spirit of avarice and covetousness, like Judas.

ii. By being over-anxious about getting rich, and so taken up with the business of the world that the work of the soul is crowded out.

iii. By allowing the love of money to lead us into dishonesty of any sort.

III. Consider that we are to use riches, and the influence they give us, with a view to eternity:

i. By ministering to the poor, relieving distress, &c., realizing our LORD’s words, “*Inasmuch as ye have done it*,” &c.—(S. Matt., xxv., 40.)

ii. By supporting the work of the Church, recognizing the duty of increasing its sphere of work.

iii. By having at heart the interests of CHRIST, and so laying up treasure in heaven (S. Matt., vi., 20-21); our gold may be made into our crown, though a great source of temptation.

Affections.—Realize the responsibility of wealth; pray for wisdom in dispensing what GOD has given you; resolve to remember that you are but God’s steward.

THURSDAY AFTER NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MANNA.

"And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said, one to another, It is manna, for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."—Ex. xvi., 14-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the faithful Israelite in the early morning gathering his daily food.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, “*Give us this day our daily Bread.*”

I. Consider what the Manna was:

i. The name Manna (what is it?) signifies that it was a mystery; so with its antitype, the Human Body of CHRIST, GOD Incarnate; so with the Body of CHRIST in the Holy Eucharist. We cannot penetrate the mystery, and let us not enquire too curiously into it, but believe and adore Him, who is the Living Bread That came down from heaven.

ii. The Manna which is now found is, in some respects, like this here described; in others different. It seems probable, judging from the analogy of GOD's work in the Incarnation, in the feeding of the multitude twice recorded in the Gospels, and in the Holy Eucharist, of all which the Manna is a type, that GOD used something already existing, to which He gave new properties, and which He multiplied miraculously, to be the food of the Israelites in the wilderness.

II. Consider some points in which the Manna especially typifies the Holy Eucharist:

i. It came down from heaven and was covered with the dew; so our LORD with the dews of the HOLY GHOST.

ii. It was “*a small, round thing.....as the hoar frost*” (the word translated round means “stripped”); so our LORD, in the Eucharist, stripped of His glory, hidden under the small humble forms of Bread and Wine. The hoar frost, too, covers the meanest things of earth, making them exquisitely beautiful with its crystals, each of which, under the microscope, reveals the form of a Cross; so our LORD in the Eucharist transforms the common elements into the food of heaven, transforms the life of the faithful communicant, making it morally beautiful; and always the shadow of the Cross is there, for the Eucharist is the Memorial of the Passion.

iii. It fell in the wilderness, where the people without it must have perished; so the Holy Communion is the “*Esca Viatorum*” passing through the wilderness of this world, and realizing that without it they must indeed faint by the way (S. Mark, viii., 3).

iv. The Israelites had to go forth from the camp to gather it, and to observe certain rules. It must be gathered early, for when the sun was hot it melted away. It must be gathered every day except the seventh; if this law were broken it became corrupted. So of the Eucharist, we must leave the world behind as we go forth early, according to the rule of the Church (Ps., lxiii., 1). How many, who from self-indulgence or self-will come late, find that for them the blessings have melted away? How different is a Communion received devoutly, according to the laws of the Church, from one which is an act of disobedience. What should have been sweet becomes corrupted, food becomes poison, for there is such a possibility as eating and drinking damnation (I. Cor., xi., 29).

v. The worldly called it contemptuously “*light bread*” (Numb., xxi., 5), but to the faithful it tasted to each according to his liking (Wisdom, xvi., 20-21); so of the Eucharist, to each a supply of his needs.

vi. It ceased when they came to Canaan, though they had the golden pot of Manna there as a remembrance; so when we reach heaven we shall no longer feed on the Eucharist, but pass into the very life of CHRIST, but with sweet recollections of the gifts of His love while we were still in the wilderness.

Affections.—Make an act of reverent faith in our LORD's Presence in the Holy Eucharist; adore Him there present; pray that you may never lose the benefits of Communion by irreverence, carelessness, or disobedience; resolve to make a very careful preparation for your next Communion.

FRIDAY AFTER NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LAWS OF TEMPTATION.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—I. Cor., x., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a potter watching his vessels of clay, and tempering the furnace in which they are baking.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in all your temptations you may remember that GOD is watching you, and will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength.

Temptation is the warfare of life; this text is most important as revealing the general laws of that temptation which is the normal state of our life here. After the warning of the last meditation we might have been paralyzed by fear had we not been assured of these laws.

I. Consider our temptations:

i. They are not peculiar; numbers are struggling with the very same; they seem to us the hardest possible, because they are directed against the weak spots of our character, they are allowed by the Providence of God to strengthen us, planned by the malice of Satan to overcome us; one of these is the result of each temptation.

ii. They are not greater than our strength; if they were they would cease to be temptations. *"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."* (Deut. xxxiii., 25.)

iii. They are to be up to our strength; for grace is not given us to be wasted, but that it may all be used; so we may measure our grace by our temptations, just as a column of air is measured by its pressure. S. Ephrem Syrus says, that as the potter removes his vessels of clay exactly at the right moment, and tempers the heat of the furnace exactly to their needs—if he withdrew them a few minutes too soon they would be soft and useless, if he left them a little too long they would be cracked and spoiled; so God withdraws from us temptation exactly at the moment when it has done its work in us.

II. Consider the way of escape:

i. GOD, Who permits the temptation, provides the way of escape.

ii. *The way* ($\tau \dot{\imath} \nu \acute{\epsilon} \nu \beta \alpha \sigma \nu$), not *a way*; God does not promise an alternative, but simply one path, in which it is our duty and our safety to tread.

iii. What is *the* way of escape in your own temptation? Are you using it? Giving up the occasions of sin; using prayer, meditation, Holy Communion, confession.

III. Consider the result of using this way of escape:

i. *"That ye may be able to bear it"*—not to get rid of it; we get rid of our temptations sometimes by yielding to them, but their continual presence is often a sign that they have not been yielded to.

ii. When you are able to bear it, it will have done its work in strengthening your weak spot, but it may still be left to keep you humble and watchful, to save you from the danger of self-confidence.

iii. A continual conquest over and endurance of temptation leads to the promised crown.
—S. James, i., 12.

Affections.—Realize the necessity of temptation; pray for grace to use it always as a means of advance; resolve to be very patient in enduring temptation.

SATURDAY AFTER NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE DANGER OF SELF-CONFIDENCE.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—I. Cor., x., 12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Peter in his self-confidence assuring our LORD *"If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise"* (S. Mark, xiv., 31).

PRELUDE II.—Pray for distrust of self, and therefore watchfulness.

The text is the *conclusion* of a long and elaborate argument, and occupies a deeply important place, as being the inspired lesson drawn from the history of the wanderings and mistakes of the Israelites in the wilderness.

I. Consider :

- i. It was addressed to a Church which boasted of its knowledge, and which, through pride, had fallen into most degrading sensual sins.
- ii. It illustrates the danger of the Corinthians from the similar experience of the Israelites, who, *after* being instructed and pledging themselves to the service of GOD, through want of watchfulness continually fall into sin.
- iii. It enunciates a great law : that it is those who have attained a certain height in spiritual life who most need to practice watchfulness and care.

II. Consider some of the dangers of this condition :

- i. Self-confidence : so many difficulties have been overcome, so much ground won, so much experience gained, that now I can hold my own.
- ii. Sloth : the reaction after many struggles and their consequent fatigue ; the relaxation of that intense watchfulness which seemed to be required, when surrounded by foes, and struggling to a standing place ; now I can take breath, and rest awhile.
- iii. The artifice of Satan : removing temptation for a time that we may feel secure, but planning an attack in an unguarded moment on a defenceless spot.

III. Consider some of the lessons of the text :

- i. Distrust of self; not to think we stand, but to realize that there are always heights before us to be attempted, and that there is no safe standing place in this life.
- ii. The need of extra watchfulness in times of freedom from temptation, and therefore at such times especial care in self-examination.
- iii. Humility : recognizing the possibilities of sin in our own hearts.

Affections.—Make acts of humility and trust in GOD ; pray for grace to know yourself ; resolve to make a very careful self-examination.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

OUR LORD WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM, I.

“And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.”—S. Luke, xix., 41.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD weeping over Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that all GOD's mercies to you may not be in vain.

The history of Jerusalem is a tale of divine love and human ingratitude.

I. Consider the history of Jerusalem:

i. It was at last won from the Jebusites by David, after having resisted the attacks of Judah and Benjamin.

ii. It was more often besieged than any city in the world, but many and many a time protected by God from its enemies; from the time of its capture by David to its destruction by Titus it endured seventeen sieges, twice it was razed to the ground, and on two other occasions its walls were levelled.

iii. After being almost destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and left for years in ruins, it was rebuilt, and at the period of our LORD's life was in its greatest magnificence.

II. Consider this as a history of the soul:

i. Won from the power of Satan on the battle-field of Calvary; won perhaps after many a struggle in your own case from captivity to sin.

ii. Defended by God's grace in many and many a temptation; besieged again and again by the world, the flesh, and the devil, but in vain.

iii. Actually taken by the enemy, when you fell into mortal sin, but restored, and the fortifications of grace rebuilt, and how often?

III. Consider our LORD weeping over its end; after all to fall away:

i. All this great love wasted, met with basest ingratitude; and your soul, has His love for you kindled in you any real love? *“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”* (Ps., cxvi., 12.)

ii. All this power and magnificence only to be destroyed, only to feed the flames; and your soul, with all its gifts and faculties, made for God, for heaven, what will be its end? Think of the possibility of all those powers lost, of all those gifts only fuel for the fires of eternity; think, and weep, as JESUS did, for the souls that are lost.

iii. Our LORD wept here, as at the grave of Lazarus and in Gethsemane, at the fruits of sin; wept at the results of those sins for which you do not weep; think, and weep, as JESUS did, for the sins of the world.

Affections.—Realize God's goodness to you, and the value of your soul; pray that you may never fall away; resolve to do some deed of charity to-day as an act of gratitude.

MONDAY AFTER TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

OUR LORD WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM, II.

"And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."—S. Luke, xix., 41-42.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD weeping over Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may use well the time of your visitation.

I. Consider the day of opportunity:

- i. It had been prepared for by years of prophecy and teaching in the case of Jerusalem, everything had been a preparation for it.
- ii. It was our LORD'S visitation, and especially those three years of His ministerial work, so full of grace and blessing.
- iii. So in the history of our own souls, all the circumstances of life are a preparation for our day of opportunity, the visitation of JESUS CHRIST to our souls.

II. Consider the day of blindness:

- i. There had been a time when the people of Jerusalem felt the power of our LORD'S words, the influence of His life; a time when they were touched by His teaching and example; but they neglected the opportunity, they resisted the pleadings of grace, and, as a necessary result, they became blind.
- ii. This period of blindness, synchronized with great opportunities all around them, great graces, unparalleled evidences of GOD's love, but they had destroyed the capacity to see, and so these things were hid from their eyes. GOD did not withdraw His grace, but they had made themselves impervious to it.

- iii. It is so with men now; neglect of the day of opportunity, resistance to the Voice of GOD must end in the destruction of the faculties of spiritual light and hearing; and so with all the means of grace around them, with all the work of GOD for them, they are untouched, because they have destroyed the powers through which they might have returned to GOD, not because GOD has deserted them.

III. Consider the Day of Judgment:

- i. In the case of Jerusalem; in this world it was its destruction by the Romans, sad enough sight!
- ii. Our LORD followed each soul into the world beyond, and foresaw its end in eternity, each soul which had rejected His words; how much more dreadful was this sight, for it was eternal!
- iii. So for us our judgment is partly temporal, partly eternal; let us weep for ourselves, lest our LORD have to weep for us; let us judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the LORD.

Affections.—Realize the law that every unforgiven sin must be punished; pray that you may neglect no opportunity that GOD sends you: resolve to use more devoutly some one means of grace.

TUESDAY AFTER TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"Now these things were our examples"...."Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition."—I. Cor., x., 6-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Old Testament as a vast mirror in which we may see reflected our lives.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that recognizing ourselves in these pictures we may learn the lessons they would teach us.

This text supplies an inspired key to the interpretation of the Old Testament history.

I. Consider that "*these things*" are figures of us:

- i. Only those events are recorded from which we may draw instruction.
- ii. The purpose for which they happened and are written was our admonition; this was the ulterior purpose, although of course they had an immediate purpose as regards the Israelites themselves.
- iii. Our duty therefore in reading the Old Testament is, not merely to regard it as the records of an ancient and interesting people, but as the living picture of the dangers and responsibilities of our own lives.

II. This comes from the sameness of human experience. Consider:

- i. Each soul has the same object in life: to pass through a wilderness of temptation, with a promised land in view.
- ii. Each soul has the same enemies in life, the world in which it moves, its own sinful nature, and the spirit of evil, the devil.
- iii. Each soul has the same GOD of love to protect it, to supply it with needful grace; the means may be different, the Friend is the same.

III. Consider therefore the importance of studying the lives of others, and especially in the Scriptures, where we know that we have true characters, and sketched especially for our study, that we may learn from their experiences:

- i. The dangers and difficulties which beset our path.
- ii. The mistakes to be avoided.
- iii. The means to be used to reach safely our home.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the treasures of experience given us in the Bible; pray that we may be helped by the HOLY GHOST to understand its teachings; resolve to study with more diligence the Old Testament.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT.

"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—S. Luke, xi., 5-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Jacob wrestling all night with the angel.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in Prayer.

The argument here is from the less to the greater; if selfish man can be won by mere importunity to give, how much more a bountiful LORD!

I. Consider the incentives to importunate prayer:

i. "*Midnight*;" the time of great distress, of spiritual darkness or doubt, or of great temptation; but man's midnight is God's noon-day; man's necessity is God's opportunity; so the Psalmist says, "*At midnight I will rise*" (Ps. cxix., 62); and again, "*In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me.*" (Ps. cxx., 1.)

ii. "*A friend is come to me*;" a recognition of the claims of others on us, a desire to minister to the poor, the sorrowful, the sin-laden; a call to work for CHRIST.

iii. "*I have nothing to set before him*;" the realization of our own poverty, and utter inability to help.

II. Consider to whom we can go:

i. To One Who says, "*Ye are My friends*" (S. John, xv., 14), Who is the Friend of the Friendless.

ii. To One Who has entered into His House, the Heavens; and shut to the door, the cloud which received Him out of sight; whose children, the saints, sleep in Jesus in the same bed of the grave.

iii. To One Who in closing the door to sight says, "*Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*" Whose Apostle S. Paul asks others to pray that a door may be opened for him.—Col., iv., 3. Whose Apostle S. John witnesses that he beheld a door opened.—Rev., iv., 1.

III. Consider some lessons:

i. What to pray for; Bread for the hungry—the food of the soul, as well as of the body; S. Augustine takes the three loaves as the knowledge of the Holy Trinity; three in Persons, One in Substance.

ii. How to pray; with earnest importunity and perseverance; ask, seek, knock; and these are not the same, but ascending steps in the ladder of prayer.

iii. The result of prayer; all we need, more than we ask, for both ourselves and our friends.

Affections.—Make acts of faith, hope, and love; pray for perseverance in prayer; resolve to make your intercessions with more fervour.

THURSDAY AFTER TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE THREE LOAVES.

"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—S. Luke, xi, 5-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a devout soul seeking in the Holy Eucharist its daily bread.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that all your work may be done in the grace of your Communions.

I. Consider our LORD in the Holy Eucharist:

i. As a Friend; "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*" (S. John, xv., 13); and the Blessed Sacrament is one of the fruits of the Passion, there we can always find the Friend "*that sticketh closer than a brother.*" (Prov., xviii., 24.)

ii. How He sleeps beneath the Sacramental Species; the door is shut to sight, but not to faith, or prayer; for He says, "*I sleep, but My Heart waketh.*" (Cant., v., 2.)

iii. Throughout the midnight of man's trial He listens for the prayer; no hour too late or too dark, no need too small or too great for us to take to Him.

II. Consider:

i. "*Three loaves;*" the whole CHRIST, Body, Soul, and Divinity, asked for, and bestowed in the Holy Communion.

ii. "*Lend me;*" lend, and so a return must be made, the gift must be improved, fruits of Communions must be cultivated.

iii. "*I have nothing;*" the famine must be felt, and acknowledged, before we can appreciate the Corn of angels.

III. Consider:

i. "*A friend of mine is come to me;*" The discovery of our own inability to supply the needs of others must drive us, like Ruth, to seek sustenance not only for ourselves, but for those for whom we labour, in the field of the true Boaz, in the field of the Eucharist.

ii. Just as physical labour can only be done in the strength derived from the food of the body, so must we realize that it is in the Might of the Bread of Heaven only that our spiritual work can be accomplished.

iii. The main lesson of the parable is to persevere, and to seek again and again, until we find the supply of all our needs in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Affections.—Realize our LORD's readiness to receive you to the Sacraments; pray that you may come with more fervour; resolve to persevere in your Communions.

FRIDAY AFTER TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, I.

When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."—S. John, xi., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD talking with Martha and Mary.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace in all trials to tarry the LORD's leisure.

I. Consider our LORD's discourse with His disciples,

i. "*This sickness is for the glory of God,*" &c. ; first in the perfecting of the spiritual life of Lazarus, as we cannot doubt it did, then the Son of GOD having been first glorified *in* him, is then glorified *through* him, and *by* him to the world.

ii. "*He abode two days*" ; the need must reach its highest, must be felt before our LORD relieves it ; not till every other help has failed, does He work ; so generally in His dealings with man.

iii. "*The Jews of late sought to stone Thee ; and goest Thou thither again ?*" (v. 8) ; our LORD goes, for He has a work to do there, although just before the necessity of hiding from them had led Him to cross the Jordan ; He teaches us thus Courage when duty calls, Prudence when there is no duty in the matter. "*Are there not twelve hours in the day ?*" i. e., the day of every life is in GOD's Hands, and is long enough for the fulfilment of His purposes ; such a day is still before Me, during any part of which I can safely accomplish any work given Me by My Father.

II. Consider our LORD's discourse with Martha :

i. "*Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*" (v. 21) ; not complaint or reproach, but the one thought which had been uppermost in the minds of the sisters during the past four days, the feeling that it might all have been so different, if He had been near.

ii. "*But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee*" (v. 22) ; her confession implies Faith in Him, as having power with GOD through prayer, but falls short of recognizing Him as GOD.

iii. "*I am the resurrection, and the life*" (v. 25) ; our LORD instructs her where her views are imperfect, leading her to the confession of His Divinity (v. 27).

III. Consider our LORD's actions before raising Lazarus :

i. "*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping,....He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled*" (v. 33), (the word *ἐνεβριμήσατο* implies indignation, not grief) ; He groaned, as He saw before Him in that group a miniature world, with the results that sin had introduced, sorrow and death.

ii. "*Jesus wept*" (v. 35) ; a token of His sympathy with human sorrow ; do we sympathize at heart with the sorrows of those with whom we condole ?

iii. "*Jesus cometh to the grave*" (v. 38) ; the LORD of Life standing by the work of death, the Conqueror of Death about to compel the tyrant to surrender his captive.

Affections.—Realize that all sorrow, pain, and death is the result of sin ; pray for true sympathy with others ; resolve to try to do some act of kindness.

SATURDAY AFTER TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, II.

"He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."—S. John, xi., 43-44.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Lazarus coming forth from the tomb.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so use the ministries of CHRIST's Church that you may be loosed from all the grave-clothes of sin.

I. Consider our LORD's Call, "*Lazarus, come forth*":

i. That Voice, which at the first had called the soul of Lazarus into being, now penetrates the realms of Hades, and calls it back to this world.

ii. So sometimes by the mercy of GOD does that Voice, sounding through the kingdom of the spiritually dead, touch the sinner's heart, and call him back to life. All first motions of grace must be from GOD; that Voice thrilling in the sinner's soul must awaken the desire for life, must call him to come forth from the chamber of death to the chamber of penitence.

II. Consider the condition of Lazarus:

i. He comes forth bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes, with all the marks of the tomb upon him.

ii. So the sinner, as, obeying the Voice of JESUS, he comes forth, and shows himself in all the misery of his state. Who made those bonds which fetter his limbs? himself; they are the habits of a sinful life. Who wrapped those grave-clothes so carefully about him? the devil; but not till he was helpless, dead, and could make no resistance.

III. Consider the work of CHRIST's Church, "*Loose him, and let him go*":

i. It is the office of the Voice to call the sinner from the grave of sin to come forth, to show himself as he is to the Church.

ii. It is the office of the Church, by the ministry of Absolution, to loose him, and let him go; to break those captive chains by the sacramental power of the Precious Blood, applied according to CHRIST's ordinance to the individual penitent.

IV. Consider the result on Lazarus:

i. We may well believe that he was a different man afterwards, seeing all things from a different point of view. He knew the realities of another world; he recognized the vanities of this; he lived as one risen from the dead.

ii. So the sinner ought to be a different creature; he has tasted the bitterness of sin, he has known the slavery of spiritual death; he ought indeed to live henceforth as one, who was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.

Affections.—Realize the misery of moral death, the slavery of sin; pray for grace to hear and obey the Voice of JESUS in all things; resolve to seek His help to conquer some one habit of sin, however small.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN, I.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.”—S. Luke, xviii., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Pharisee gazing with delight on his own virtues.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from self-deception.

As we read this parable, most of us probably say inwardly, “I am thankful that I am not like the Pharisee; I at least know my faults.” Let us realize that this is being just like the Pharisee.

I. Consider the growth of self-deception here:

i. The Pharisee began by deceiving his neighbours by a specious outward sanctity of life, attention to minute external observance, wearing the dress of sanctity, instead of cultivating the character of a saint.

ii. He then deceived himself by persuading himself that he was what others thought him to be, that he was the character which he simply wore.

iii. He tries at last in his blindness to deceive God; and God exhibits him to us as a warning.

II. Consider his true characteristics:

i. As far as outward religion was concerned, he was faultless. Almsgiving, Fasting, Prayer, all had been fulfilled, and there is no reason to suppose that his account of himself was false.

ii. It was the spirit of religion which was wanting, a recognition of the true relationship between God and man. Instead of “*Lord, I am not worthy,*” he congratulates God on having so good a servant.

iii. He had a disbelief in the goodness of every one else (*οἱ λοιποὶ, the rest of men*). He stands alone, and is satisfied that he is the best.

iv. In his prayer his eye is never taken off himself to be lifted to God, his comparison is between himself and his fellow-man, not, as it should be, between himself and God.

v. In his prayer he can only think of his own goodness, how much he has done for God. He does not see his sins at all, and forgets how much God has done for him.

vi. The fault was not so much in the injustice of his judgment of the Publican (for *τελαύνης* was synonymous with dishonesty), but that he showed an ignorance of the possibilities of his own heart. Our LORD says, “*Judge not, that ye be not judged*” (S. Matt., vii., 1), *i. e.*, we should not judge because the same germ of evil is in us, and it is by God’s grace alone that it has not been developed. The great mark of spiritual growth in the Apostles was when, at the revelation that there was a traitor among them, each distrusted himself, and asked, “*Is it I?*” It would have been right for the Pharisee to have been thankful that he had been preserved from the sin of the Publican, but here it is pride, not gratitude, that is the source of his thanksgiving.

III. Consider that the Publican is not a pattern character, but a contrast. He thinks of no one’s sin but his own; humility is the virtue which in him leads to self-knowledge and penitence. The contrast in the parable is between pride and humility, self-deception and self-knowledge, extreme formalism without the spirit of religion, and somewhat of carelessness with it, self-righteousness and self-abasement.

Affections.—Realize the blindness of self-love; pray for self-knowledge; resolve to watch against self-contemplation.

MONDAY AFTER ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE UNJUST JUDGE.

"There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for awhile: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."—S. Luke, xviii., 2-6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the woman of Canaan following and entreating our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in prayer.

I. Consider the persons in this Parable:

i. The Unjust Judge; none but the Son of GOD might have ventured to compare, or rather to contrast, him with GOD; but it is the unlikeness on which the Parable dwells, so that the unrighteousness is not, as some have thought, an accident, but deliberately chosen to enhance the force of the Parable; for the argument is, that if unrighteous man may be moved by entreaty to do what he hates, how much more may GOD be moved by prayer to do what He loves.

ii. The widow well represents either the Church on earth, or the individual soul, the widowed bride of CHRIST; weak and poor, and that very weakness and poverty her strongest plea in GOD's sight.

iii. The adversary of the Church and of the soul is the devil; and the prayer of the widow is but a paraphrase of the last petition of the LORD'S Prayer, "*Deliver us from the Evil One.*"

II. Consider the effect of prayer:

i. "*He would not for awhile*"; GOD, too, seems sometimes to delay to answer, but it is for His children's good; to perfect their faith, to teach them the habit of prayer.

ii. "*Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her*"; the same selfish motive, to be rid of her importunity, led the disciples to intercede for the woman of Canaan—S. Matt., xv., 23, the whole of which miracle is a commentary on this Parable.

iii. "*Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?*" (v. 7); a series of contrasts here, which heighten the force of the argument: (a.) between the widow despised of men, and the elect chosen of GOD; (b.) between the widow's feeble complaints and the mighty crying (*βοῶντας*) of the saints; (c.) between the short time that her importunities beset the judge, and the day and night that these prayers go up before GOD.

iv. "*He will avenge them speedily*" (v. 8); He will not leave them a moment longer, in the furnace of temptation, on the battle-field exposed to the attacks of their adversary, than is needful to perfect them.

III. Consider the purpose of this Parable,—to teach:

i. "*That men ought always to pray*" (v. 1); *i. e.*, that men must *needs* pray always, not a duty so much as a necessity; so S. Paul says, "*Pray without ceasing.*" (I. Thess., v., 17.) Prayer here is to be understood as the continual desire of the soul, rather than the utterance of the lips.

ii. That men are "*not to faint*" (v. 1); *i. e.*, to give up in despair. One of the objects of the Parable is to teach men this,—to persevere, although GOD seems for awhile to give no answer.

iii. That we may draw a lesson for the soul's encouragement, even from the darkest scenes of this unrighteous world.

Affections.—Realize the importance of prayer; pray for more faith in prayer; resolve to make an effort to be very fervent in all your prayers to-day.

TUESDAY AFTER ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN, II.

"And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican."
—S. Luke, xviii., 9-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Pharisee and Publican coming into GOD'S Presence.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always pray with humility.

I. Consider this parable in connection with that which precedes it :

i. The chapter begins with the parable of the Unjust Judge, which is immediately followed by this. Our LORD begins each by giving the key to its interpretation. In the former, "*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*" (v. 1). In the latter, "*And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.*"

ii. Both refer to the duty and necessity of prayer. In the former our LORD teaches one condition of prayer, perseverance; in the latter another condition, humility. In the one we are taught to pray without ceasing; in the other we are warned against spiritual pride in our devotions.

II. Consider to whom this parable is addressed :

i. At first thought to the Pharisees, but not if we consider; for what would have been the use of exhibiting to the Pharisees just what they admired, and thought a perfect character?

ii. To the disciples, who had made some progress in the school of CHRIST, but were in danger of falling back into the Pharisaeic sin, spiritual pride, accompanied, as it always is, with a contempt for others.

III. Consider the prayer of these two men :

i. Of the Pharisee :

(a.) "*God, I thank Thee.*" His prayer at first promises well; but for what does he give thanks?—not merely that he is good, but that he is alone in his goodness; not only for his goodness, but almost for the evil he sees in others.

(b.) "*That I am not as other men are*"—(*lit.*, as the rest of men). He divides all mankind into two classes, putting himself in a class alone, and thrusting down every one else into the other; and as he cannot think too good things of himself, so he cannot think too bad things of others; they not merely fall short of his perfections, but are "*extortioners, unjust, adulterers.*"

(c.) He drags in an individual, of whom he may have known nothing, but that he was a publican, and uses him as a sort of dark background to set off the brilliant colours of his own virtues.

ii. Of the publican :

(a.) The essence of his prayer is a sense of unworthiness, shown in his standing afar off, smiting his breast, &c.

(b.) "*To me THE sinner*" (*τοῷ ἀμαρτωλῷ*). He, like S. Paul, thinks of himself as the chief of sinners, a characteristic of true penitence, to feel no one's sin so great as our own. The Pharisee thought no one so good as himself.

(c.) He is justified, *i. e.*, forgiven; angels' joy hymns over the forgiven penitent contrast sadly with the Pharisee's sneers.

IV. Consider from this the danger of the *absence* of charity, and *presence* of pride, which so often go together. Pride results from comparing ourselves with other men, Humility from comparing ourselves with our LORD. This parable is a commentary on the text, "*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.*" (S. Luke, i., 53.)

Affections.—Make an act of contrition; pray for the grace of humility; resolve to avoid uncharitable judgments.

WEDNESDAY AFTER ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MAN BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH, I.

“And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”—S. John, ix., 1-2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD gazing upon the blind man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater spiritual sight.

I. Consider the relation of sin to suffering ; “ *Who did sin?* ” :

i. The sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and in no way more commonly than by the inheritance of physical infirmity ; our LORD by His answer does not deny this, but merely states that it was not the case in the present instance.

ii. Very often suffering is the direct result of our own sin, as our LORD intimates in the case of the Paralytic—S. Matt., ix., 2 ; but it is not so here. In all cases suffering is the result of sin cleaving to the race of man.

iii. In our LORD’s answer here, as in the Book of Job, the uncharitable opinion, that wherever there was a more than ordinary sufferer there was a more than ordinary sinner, is distinctly condemned.

II. Consider the blind man as a type of humanity :

i. The man was blind from his birth ; thus representing the natural condition of all men since the Fall, the sin of the race causing the spiritual blindness of mankind until brought into contact with the Healer.

ii. The man from the very nature of his disease cannot see our LORD ; JESUS sees him, and approaches to heal him ; so man in his natural condition cannot at first see GOD, but GOD sees him in his misery and blindness, and comes to heal him ; so it was with the human race at large in the Incarnation, so it has been with every individual soul. All first motions towards GOD must be the result of His preventing grace.

iii. Our LORD anoints his eyes with clay ; the clay has a symbolic reference to Gen. ii., 7, and implies the identity of the Hand which healed by means of clay with the Hand which created in the same way.

III. Consider the healing :

i. “ *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam* ” (v. 7). Having placed within the man’s reach the means of grace, our LORD instructs him as to its use ; his faith is called into action, and manifests itself by obedient use of the means provided, and his eyes are opened ; we see here symbolized the Sacraments ; and especially Baptism, in which man can wash away the blindness of original sin ; and Absolution, by which he may be healed of that caused by post-baptismal sin.

ii. Many washed in Siloam’s waters but were not healed ; so the means of grace are within the reach of all, but are only efficacious in those who use them with faithful obedience.

iii. The neighbours who had known him in his blindness doubted whether it was he or not, so changed did he seem ; so should it be now with those who are spiritually healed ; the working of grace manifesting itself in an altered life.

Affections.—Realize the blindness which belongs to nature ; pray that grace may accomplish its work in you ; resolve to accept suffering as the remedial penance of sin.

THURSDAY AFTER ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WISDOM'S HOUSE.

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled."—Prov., ix, 1-6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the House that the Wisdom of GOD, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, hath built upon earth, the Holy Catholic Church.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may ever dwell in that House, and eat of her Bread, and drink of the Wine which she hath mingled.

I. Consider these words as a description of the Church:

i. The importance of pillars in the structure of a Church; without them the building would soon fall. What are these seven pillars? The seven sacramental channels through which the HOLY GHOST works in supplying strength and support to each individual member of the whole Church. Without them the Church of CHRIST would long since have ceased to be; with them she can never fall.

ii. *"She hath killed her beasts (or her sacrifices); she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table."* Is not this a description of the preparation of the Holy Eucharist?

iii. *"She hath sent forth her maidens."* Her priests and preachers, like the servants in the parable, to bid faithful souls to the Eucharistic feast. In (Ps. lxviii., 11) *"Great was the company of the preachers,"* the last word, as here, is in the feminine, implying perhaps their tenderness and love for souls, as a mother's for her children.

II. Consider who are bidden:

i. *"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither";* remember the real meaning of simplicity as opposed to duplicity, like the guilelessness of Nathaniel.—S. John, i., 47.

ii. *"Him, that wanteth understanding"; "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."* (I. Cor., i., 26.)

iii. Those who have the Wedding Garment.—S. Matt., xxii., 11. *"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."* (Isaiah, lxi., 10.)

III. Consider of what the Feast is composed:

i. *"Come, eat of My Bread"; "and the Bread which I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* (S. John, vi., 51.)

ii. *"The wine which I have mingled";* the Precious Blood, which, mingled with water, flowed from the spear-pierced Side; the wine which the Good Samaritan pours into the wounds of our soul, the chalice of salvation.

iii. How wonderfully the whole description of Wisdom's House works up to, and finds its consummation in the last verse; it is as though the sole purpose of the building of the House was that it might be the dwelling place of the Blessed Sacrament, as in one sense it is.

Affections.—Realize that it is the Holy Eucharist which makes the Church God's House: pray that you may never come to your Communion without the wedding garment; resolve to trust in the seven pillars of the Church by using, as you need them, the sacraments.

FRIDAY AFTER ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MAN BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH, II.

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."—S. John, ix., 16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the man that was healed standing before the council of the Pharisees.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for boldness in confessing CHRIST before men.

In the history of this man after he was healed we have a striking picture of the growth of faith and unbelief. The Pharisees and the man himself are each brought in contact with a truth, that JESUS has healed the blind; in the examination of that truth they come to opposite conclusions.

I. The Pharisees approach the consideration with prejudice, on account of what they have been taught to hold a violation of the Sabbath. Consider the stages of the growth of unbelief:

i. Debate ending in a division of opinion: At the first examination of the man they enquire carefully into the facts; on the one hand is their old prejudice about the Sabbath, on the other is the manifestation of divine and beneficent power (vv. 13-18).

ii. Judgment: "*We know that this man is a sinner*" (v. 24); the examination of the parents in no way shakes the testimony of the man, and establishes the fact that he had been born blind, and that now he saw, and yet they decide in contradiction to the evidence, and accuse the man of collusion with our LORD in pretending only to be blind; for "*Give God the praise*" (lit., Give glory to God) is simply an adjuration to confess the truth—cf. Josh., vii., 19 (vv. 18-25).

iii. Angry rejection: After the second examination of the man, in which they fail to shake either his courage or his testimony, and are confounded by his simple argument (vv. 30-34), they cast him out, or excommunicate him, saying, "*Thou wast altogether born in sins*" (v. 34), and thus upsetting their own charge, that he was an impostor, and not blind at all.

iv. So too often now, people who bring their prejudices to the consideration of some doctrine which confronts them, only oppose it more violently the more clearly its truth is proved.

II. The man approaching the truth without prejudice gains courage, and a clearer grasp of the truth, under persecution. Consider the stages of the growth of faith:

i. He expresses a favourable opinion; "*He is a prophet*" (v. 17).

ii. He makes himself the defender, and disciple of his benefactor (vv. 30-34).

iii. Our LORD finds him, and instructs him, vouchsafing to him a clear knowledge of the truth of His Divinity; and he confesses, and worships CHRIST.

iv. So now with those who, with childlike simplicity, seek to know the truth, and not merely to carry out their prejudiced views; such are indeed taught of GOD.—S. John, vi., 45.

Affections.—Realize the danger of prejudice; pray for a teachable spirit; resolve to say the Collect for Whitsun-day for a certain time.

REGIS

BIBL. MA.
COLLEGE

SATURDAY AFTER ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MAN BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH, III.

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."—S. John, ix., 4-5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD finding the man after he had been cast out of the synagogue.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true self-knowledge.

This miracle marks a crisis in our LORD's work, the beginning of the formation of the New Society in distinction to the dominant religion. Our LORD's claim to be GOD had provoked a manifestation of open violence—ch. viii., 58-59; His proof of His divine power, by healing the blind man, is no better received; and the man is cast out by the Jews, and received by our LORD.

I. Consider our LORD's teaching here as to His ministry:

i. A recognition of its shortness; "*I must work while it is day; the night cometh.*"

ii. A revelation of its purpose; "*As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.*"

iii. A manifestation of its power; the healing of the blind man.

II. Consider the formation of the New Society:

i. Our LORD claims from His followers the recognition of His GODHEAD; "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" (v. 35).

ii. To this man's question, "*Who is He, Lord?*" (v. 36) JESUS answers by teaching him that He is the Son of GOD, and making a disciple of one who had been cast out by the world.

iii. He accepts the man's adoration as the Divine Head of the New Society.

III. Consider the result of CHRIST's office as the Light of the World:

i. "*For judgment I am come into this world*" (v. 39); not to execute judgment, but that things might be judged or manifested by the fact of being brought in contact with the Light; that Light which was to reveal every man's state, showing much that seemed fair to be false; and much that was little thought of to be true; our LORD comes into the world to be the Touchstone to try every man.

ii. "*That they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind*" (v. 39); so it was with this blind man, both physically and spiritually; so it was spiritually with the Pharisees. There is a marked distinction in the Greek between "*those that see not*" (*οἱ μὴ βλέποντες*) and "*those who become blind*" (*τυφλοὶ*); the former have the power of sight, though it is not used; the latter have lost that power.

iii. "*Are we blind also?*" This question was asked by some of the Pharisees who still pretended to follow our LORD; our LORD's answer shows that ignorance is better than misused knowledge, implies the responsibility of privileges.

Affections.—Realize the claims of our LORD to your whole heart; pray that you may worship Him better; resolve to examine how far you act up to your light.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE DEAF MAN WITH AN IMPEDIMENT IN HIS SPEECH.

"And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech."—S. Mark, vii., 32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD leading the deaf man aside.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may hear God's Voice, and speak His praises.

I. Consider the disease and method of cure:

i. He was deaf, but not completely dumb, only stammering; and perhaps this may have been caused by his deafness, as those who are perfectly deaf often lose the faculty of distinct speech.

ii. The touch and word of command were common to most of our LORD's cures; the peculiar treatment (used besides only in the case of the blind man, S. Mark, viii., 23) was the taking him aside from the multitude.

iii. The initial stages of the cure showed difficulty, and required time.

II. Consider what this represents in the treatment of a soul:

i. The spiritual disease is most common. Inability to hear the Voice of God, in the Bible, Church, Conscience, Nature, and that frequent complaint, incapacity for prayer, and the latter disease is the result of the former. If we do not train the ear to listen for God's Voice, we shall find difficulty in speaking to God. The deafness must be treated before anything can be done for the speech.

ii. While the final stage of the cure of all diseases of the soul is the same, the Sacramental touch, the absolving word of CHRIST through the Church, the peculiar need of this class is to be led aside from the multitude; solitude, that, the din of the world being hushed, we may hear the whisper of the still small voice of God, "*I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.*" (Hos., ii., 14.)

iii. The cure requires patient perseverance. This is taught by the many stages in the miracle. The ear has to be trained to listen for God's Voice, and then the lips will answer in prayer and praise.

III. Consider this act of taking the sufferer aside:

i. God takes us aside often by sickness. This is the object of sickness, God's way of dealing with the soul, a time for being much alone with God, with the world removed for awhile from us.

ii. We ought not to wait for God's Visitation, but realizing our own infirmity, feeling that we are spiritually deaf and stammering, and learning from this miracle the first step towards our cure, we ought to go aside from the world, and in prayer and meditation seek relief.

iii. Is not this, to some extent, at least, our disease? Let us use the remedy. First, systematic training of the ear, by regular exercise of meditation, and then seeking in the Sacraments the touch of our LORD, and the absolving word, "*Be opened.*"

Affections.—Realize the misery of spiritual deafness; pray that you may hear God's Voice; resolve on some rule of prayer and meditation.

MONDAY AFTER TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SIGH OF JESUS.

"And looking up to heaven, He sighed."—S. Mark, vii., 34.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD groaning over the misery of this deaf man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may truly sympathize with those whose distress you relieve.

I. Consider the sigh, or rather groan (*εστέναξε*):

- i. It is an involuntary expression of suffering, escapes the sufferer unconsciously, and is a sign of real feeling.
- ii. It belongs to humanity, and is a sign of our LORD's true human nature, that "*we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities*" (Heb., iv., 15); the token of a tender human heart.
- iii. It manifests one side of charity, viz., sympathy with the suffering.

II. Consider the cause of this sigh:

i. Human misery, human sin: so He wept over Jerusalem, and at the grave of Lazarus, while the awful sufferings of His Passion drew from Him no complaint. Do we sympathize in the misery and suffering that is all around us? Do we sorrow over man's sin?

ii. The disease was not so dangerous or dreadful as some that our LORD healed, yet in one sense more sad, to have lost the joy of life while strength to live is still left; so in the spiritual disease which it represents, it is not mortal, but it deprives spiritual life of all its happiness. We may fulfil our duties and avoid mortal sin, and still be spiritually deaf and stammering. It is the toil of Christian life we see so often, without the joy, the sunlight of close communion with GOD.

iii. The realization of what man might be; the contrast, not of one misery with another, but of each man with the IDEAL in the life of our LORD Himself.

III. Consider our LORD sighing as an example to us:

i. The law of His life was a law of love to man; but charity has two sides, an active and a passive side; both were perfectly manifested in this miracle; the passive in that the sigh indicated our LORD's real sympathy for the man; the active in that that sympathy led Him to relieve the man's misery.

ii. The active should never be without the passive, if charity is to be real. It is no true charity to give, perhaps, of our abundance, to the relief of distress, unless we really feel with the sufferer.

iii. The passive may sometimes be without the active, we may sympathize often where we cannot help; and, in this way, the poorest can exercise charity, and, if it be real, that compassion will often find an active expression.

Affections.—Examine your acts of charity; pray for real love of your neighbour; resolve to think more of the miseries of those you relieve.

TUESDAY AFTER TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

OUR LORD WALKING ON THE SEA.

"And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea."—S. Matt., xiv., 22-26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the weary disciples at last recognizing our LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in resisting temptation, in enduring trial.

This whole scene may well be taken as a picture of our journey through life.

I. Consider the journey of life :

i. In the ship of the Church, over the waves of the world, to the shores of eternity.

ii. In the Church, at once her strength and the cause of diabolic attack, the Sacramental gifts, typified by the fragments of the bread which CHRIST had blessed, the pledge of divine power.

iii. In the night time; around us not only the darkness of the natural heart, but the darkness of sin, the darkness caused by the presence of the hosts of evil.

II. Consider the difficulties of the journey :

i. They were tossed with waves, and the wind was contrary; so does each Christian now have to meet that storm of temptation, those waves of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which, raised and lashed to fury by the agency of the evil one, try to beat us back, and make us abandon the heavenward way.

ii. They toiled all night, and only just maintained their ground; so S. Paul says, "*wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND*" (Eph., vi., 13); if we can hold our ground till JESUS comes, it is enough.

iii. While they toiled, JESUS on the mountain prayed; so it is now, our confidence on the battle-field of life must be that JESUS ever liveth to make intercession for us.

III. Consider the end of the journey :

i. They toiled till the fourth watch, between three and six o'clock in the morning, and then came deliverance from the storm; so now sometimes we are left toiling all through the night of life, sufficient if that glorious vision of JESUS walking on the waves comes to gladden the heart of the dying Christian.

ii. JESUS appeared walking on the sea, treading under foot those billows which had so alarmed them.

iii. At first they did not recognize Him, but at last, when they received Him into the ship, immediately they were "*at the land whither they went*" (S. John, vi., 21); so now often in the time of storm JESUS is most near, and we see Him not; so in the hour of death, immediately for us the storm ceases, and we are at the place whither our life has been tending, safe on the shores of eternity.

Affections.—Realize the nearness of JESUS to us in the time of storm; pray for spiritual sight to recognize Him; resolve to persevere in patiently struggling against your own special temptation.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

S. PETER WALKING ON THE SEA.

"And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His Hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—S. Matt., xiv., 28-32.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD stretching forth His Hand to S. Peter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to look “unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.” (Heb., xii., 2.)

I. Consider S. Peter’s address to our LORD :

i. How noble, generous, and true were S. Peter’s impulses, as shown by his words, “*Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.*”

ii. Wherever we see our LORD we must wish to be with Him, to come to Him, though it be on the dangerous waters of the world, or, like the three Holy Children, amid the flames of the furnace, the fires of temptation; we may say in every danger or difficulty, “only let me be sure it is Thou, that this is Thy Call, and I will come.”

iii. Our LORD says, Come; He accepts the offer, He tries the courage of His disciple; so now often our LORD takes us at our word.

II. Consider S. Peter’s attempt and failure :

i. At first he walked on the water without difficulty; for his eyes and his heart were fixed on our LORD, his one thought was to reach Him.

ii. Then he saw that the wind was boisterous, and was afraid, and began to sink; the wind was boisterous before, but he did not notice it, being entirely engrossed by the thought of his LORD; as soon as he looks away from Him he sees the difficulties, and loses faith and courage.

iii. How often this is so with us, we take a few brave steps, and then begin to sink, because we look at the dangers and obstacles in our path, instead of looking at the end; “*No man, having put his hand to the plough, AND LOOKING BACK, is fit for the kingdom of God.*” (S. Luke, ix., 62.)

III. Consider our LORD’s gracious help in the time of need :

i. S. Peter cries, “*Lord, save me*”; the right thing to do in time of distress, to pray.

ii. Our LORD hears the prayer, and does not let him sink, but stretches out His Hand to save him. He will not let us be overwhelmed by our difficulties, if we have entered the path in obedience to His call; but He rebukes the wavering faith.

iii. It was not so much a sin on S. Peter’s part, as the loss of a great opportunity of showing his trust in CHRIST; we must not be satisfied merely with avoiding sin, but we must be on our watch to embrace every opportunity of proving our faith and love.

Affections.—Realize that our LORD is a very present help in trouble; pray for more faith; resolve to seek some opportunity of proving your trust in GOD.

THURSDAY AFTER TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EMMANUEL.

"They shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."—S. Matt., i., 23.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our **Lord** on the Altar in the Blessed Sacrament.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have grace to recollect His Presence in your soul after each Communion.

The Names and Titles of our **Lord** bring before us different aspects of His Work, different purposes of His Incarnation.

I. Consider the primary purpose of the Incarnation :

i. It was not to save man ; for, even if man had not fallen, the Incarnation would have been necessary to accomplish God's purpose in Creation.

ii. It was to bring God into the world, to take man into God ; the Passion was rendered necessary by man's fall, the Incarnation was part of the original purpose of God in Creation.

iii. It was as necessary for the Angels, and for the lower kingdoms of the world, as for man ; for before the Incarnation the *whole* world was outside of God, upheld, as created, by the Word of His power, but having no more intimate relation to Him than that of creature to its Creator.

II. Consider the means by which this purpose is accomplished :

i. Man by his body is the representative of all the lower kingdoms of the earth, by his spirit of the spiritual races of the universe, *i. e.*, the angelic hosts, by his soul of the moral kingdom, by becoming Incarnate in human nature, God takes the whole world into Him.

ii. In the Sacraments of the Church our **Lord** does for the individual what He has done for the race of man by the Incarnation ; in Baptism He comes into that miniature world, the soul, by Communion He enters that kingdom of His again and again.

iii. So in the Sacrament of the Altar we should especially think of our **Lord** under His Name Emmanuel.

III. Consider some of the purposes for which God comes thus to be with us :

i. In all temptation and trial to be our Strength.

ii. In sorrow, pain and sickness to be our Consolation.

iii. In joy and prosperity to be our Companion.

Affections.—Realize our **Lord's** abiding Presence in your daily life ; pray Him to bear with you the burden and heat of the day ; resolve to make your next Communion with this thought.

FRIDAY AFTER TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LUNATIC CHILD, I.

"And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away."—S. Mark, ix., 17-18.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the child struggling at the Feet of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that our LORD's touch may free you from all captivity to evil.

The symptoms correspond exactly with those of epilepsy, but this was only the ground on which the deeper spiritual evils of the child were manifested.

I. Consider the contrast :

i. Our LORD with the three disciples descending from the Mount of Transfiguration with some rays of the glory of heaven still lingering about Him.

ii. The other disciples wrangling and disputing with the multitude, the devil-possessed child, and the sorrowing father; a fit picture of the miseries of this sinful world. The highest harmonies of heaven contrasted with some of the harshest discords of earth.

iii. Like Moses, with his servant Joshua, of old descending from the mount of a fainter transfiguration; then too the enemy profiting by his absence for awhile prevailed against his people; then too the rays of that glory remained, a threatening glory like the intolerable brightness of the Old Covenant, unlike the attractive glory of the New.

II. Consider some effects of the disease :

i. Dumbness; this was not a natural defect, but the result of possession. S. Luke says, "*he suddenly crieth out*" (S. Luke, ix., 39), *i. e.*, utters inarticulate sounds, like a person in epilepsy; how often the evil in the heart checks the words of prayer, which God might hear, and changes them to mere murmurings at our hard lot, or perhaps worse.

ii. Convictions; "*he teareth him*," another symptom of epilepsy; in the moral kingdom corresponding to those paroxysms of passion which seem almost madness.

iii. Pining away; the result alike of the physical and moral evil; the constitution cannot stand these shocks long, each one leaves it weaker.

III. Consider the healing :

i. "*Bring him unto Me*" (v. 19); as the staff in Gehazi's hand could not bring to life the dead child, but the prophet has to go himself; so here with our true Elisha.—II. Kings, iv., 31.

ii. "*And He asked his father*" (v. 21). The Sponsorial office seems very strikingly illustrated here, in the father bringing the child to CHRIST, in answering in the child's stead the questions as to its state, and in being required to make profession of his faith, on which the child is healed.

iii. "*Jesus took him by the hand*" (v. 27). The Sacramental touch giving force to the words spoken; so our LORD takes each child by the hand in Baptism, for each is dead in original sin, and imparts to each the new life, which is in Him.

Affections.—Realize the misery of sin; pray for those who are in mortal sin; resolve to try to bring some child to Baptism.

SATURDAY AFTER TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LUNATIC CHILD, II.

"And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."—S. Mark, ix., 29.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mortified disciples enquiring of our LORD the cause of their failure to cast out the devil.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater faith.

I. Consider our LORD's dealing with His disciples:

i. They had allowed themselves to be separated, not only in body, but in spirit from their LORD; they had neglected the prayer and self-discipline which was the necessary preparation for meeting a foe of such peculiar malignity; like Samson, though the locks of their strength were shorn, they would "*go out as at other times before*" (Judges, xvi., 20); like him, they found their strength gone.

ii. In private they ask our LORD, "*Why could not we cast him out?*" (v. 28). It was not because they had exceeded their commission; for before they had found the devils subject unto them, and they doubtless were not only mortified, but perplexed. They had hoped to win honour for our LORD in His absence, and they had but disgraced Him.

iii. Our LORD's answer points to three defects: "*Because of your unbelief*" (S. Matt., xvii., 20); "*This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*" How often want of faith is the result of want of prayer and self-discipline; faith, like all virtues, needs to be kept burning by the oil of prayer, and the trimming of the wick by penitence.

II. Consider our LORD's dealing with the father:

i. "*If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us*" (v. 22). In that "us," we see how entirely he made his son's misery his own; like the woman of Canaan pleading for her daughter; in the "if," that he is rendering the cure more difficult by his own doubts.

ii. "*If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*" (v. 23). The question is not if I can do anything, but if thou canst believe; on this the cure must depend. I cannot work the miracle to prove the power thou doubtest, but only to reward the faith thou shovest.

iii. "*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*" (v. 24). The last clause was a proof of the first; for it is only he who believes that realizes the unbelief of his heart; the earnestness of the faith is strongly expressed.

III. Consider our LORD's dealing with the devil:

i. "*And when he saw Him, straightway the spirit tare him*" (v. 20). The Kingdom of Satan is stirred into fiercer activity by the approach of the Kingdom of CHRIST. Satan has great wrath when his time is short.—Rev., xii., 12.

ii. "*Come out of him*" (v. 25); the spirit obeys, though unwillingly.

iii. "*This kind*"; these words show that, as both among the saints and angels there are differences of rank, so with the devils.

Affections.—Realize the need of keeping alive faith by prayer and fasting; pray for a closer union with CHRIST; resolve to do all works for Him in reliance on His grace.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PARABLE OF REDEMPTION, I.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves."—S. Luke, x., 39.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the misery of the wounded man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may realize the greatness of our LORD's redeeming work.

This parable sets forth, as the Gospel of Love, the whole work of CHRIST, the whole scheme of redemption.

I. Consider the parable as a picture of the Fall of man:

i. The state of the man in Jerusalem (The Vision of Peace) represents man's condition in Paradise, enjoying the fellowship of God.

ii. The going down toward Jericho (The City Under the Curse) shows us man leaving Paradise, and falling deeper and deeper under the curse of sin in the world.

iii. The treatment he receives from the robbers declares to us the result of the temptations and assaults of the devil and his hosts upon mankind.

iv. The Priest and Levite passing by, unable to help, represent Moses and Aaron, the Law and Sacrifice, each finding it impossible to restore man.

II. Consider the Good Samaritan as a Type of our LORD:

i. *"Came where he was."* The Son of God, leaving the throne of His Father, came into this world, where man lay wounded and dying.

ii. *"Had compassion on him"*—i. e., suffered with him; no path of temptation, no road of sorrow, which was not explored by our LORD in His sojourn here.

iii. *"Bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on His own beast."* He set him on His own beast, i. e., made Himself one with man by the Incarnation, and poured into the gaping wounds the wine of His Precious Blood through the Passion, anointing him with the oil of the Holy Spirit in the gifts of Pentecost.

III. Consider the work of the Church symbolized here:

i. *"Brought him to an inn."* The Church (*παρδοχεῖον*) receiving all, i. e., Catholic. The Good Shepherd must seek and find the lost sheep, and bring him to the Fold; but the work is not finished, only begun.

ii. *"Take care of Him."* To the inn-keeper He gives this charge, and the twopence, the means with which to fulfil it. The work of the priests of the Church now begins, ministering the Word and Sacraments, and all the various means of grace.

iii. *"When I come again I will repay thee;"* the promise with which He departs; that He will come again, and that He will come to reward His faithful servants.

Affections.—Thanksgiving for the blessings of Redemption; pray that the Good Samaritan may have compassion on you; resolve to use all the means of grace in CHRIST's Church.

MONDAY AFTER THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE, II.

"Go, and do thou likewise."—S. Luke, x., 37.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD giving this command to the lawyer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to follow our LORD'S example.

I. Consider the primary object of the Parable :

- i. To magnify, and exemplify the Law of Love.
- ii. To propose, as the only standard, the Example of CHRIST.
- iii. To teach us that in the duty of imitating CHRIST we are indeed to carry on His work.

II. Consider our opportunities of fulfilling this charge :

i. As we are making our way up to Jerusalem, how many we find, who have turned their backs upon that Holy City, lying by the wayside in every condition of spiritual, moral, and physical misery.

ii. Do we pass these by, or have we compassion on them? Cain asked, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* (Gen., iv., 9); the Good Samaritan is he who recognizes his duty to be his brother's keeper (Samaritan means keeper), to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST.—(Gal., vi., 2.)

iii. But how? If we have compassion we shall find some means of ministering to our brother's necessities, of relieving his miseries.

III. Consider the means by which we may obey this command :

i. The binding up of the wounds; how much we can do by sympathy to bind up the broken heart!

ii. The carrying to the Inn; the leading the penitent to the Church, where the wounds of sin, which are beyond our skill, may be treated; where is still the cleansing Wine of the Precious Blood for the contrite sinner, the strengthening, soothing unction of the HOLY GHOST for the weary, wounded wayfarer.

iii. The two pence given to the support of the Church; alms to help her in her ministrations to the poor.

Affections.—Realize the misery around you; pray that you may be guided and blessed in your efforts to help others; resolve to do some definite act of charity.

TUESDAY AFTER THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE Two GOALS, III.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho."—S. Luke, x., 30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the wounded man lamenting that he had ventured on this journey.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always set your face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem.

I. Consider the two objects which attract the heart of man:

i. Jerusalem, the vision of peace, the type of Heaven; peace of soul, a conscience void of offence, the ever clearer vision of GOD.

ii. Jericho, the City of the Moon, the type of the world; the moon gradually increasing in size and beauty till the full moon is reached, and it bathes the night in silver splendour, and then waning till lost to sight. How like the world! promising so much, and just as all seems realized, and the prize within our grasp, changing, disappointing, ending in nothingness, leaving us in the darkness.

iii. This man in the parable is one who has known something of the vision of peace, but who has turned his back upon those calm joys, and is determined to taste what the world offers, like those who, educated in the Church with holy hopes, but attracted by the world, leave the safe path of sanctity.

II. Consider the going down to Jericho:

i. The road to Jericho was notoriously dangerous and infested by robbers. Many were the appalling tales of the treatment which unfortunate travellers experienced.

ii. So the road which leads to this world's honours and gifts is well known to be fraught with danger to the soul, infested by the enemies of good.

iii. But how many flatter themselves that they will walk so carefully, be so watchful, that they will not be overcome by the foe, that they will go only so far, and stop short of any great risk. But, alas! the enemy is upon them, and overcomes them before they realize it.

III. Consider the condition of the wounded man:

i. There he lies by the roadside, half dead, reflecting, and perhaps realizing his misery. He has lost all he had, and more, lost the power to return to the City of Peace.

ii. He has not reached Jericho. There is the changing world with its disappointing promises within sight, its deceitful glory, increasing and waning, and others passing by him, and going down, still further than he has gone, learning no lesson from his pitiful state, priding themselves on their superior wisdom or strength, only like him to fall at last.

iii. Is there no hope? The priest of the old covenant passes, representing those religions of the world which, with the best intentions, are unable to help him, because they are not endowed with supernatural gifts. The Levite passes, representing the law which may restrain some of the evils of society, but is powerless to cure them. Yes, the Good Samaritan passes, JESUS CHRIST, in the person of His priest, leading the man by the way of penitence, first to the Inn of the Church, and then slowly back to the Vision of Peace.

Affections.—Examine which way your life is tending; pray that you may never be deceived about yourself; resolve to seek first the Kingdom of GOD.

WEDNESDAY AFTER THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE EFFECTS OF MORTAL SIN, IV.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."—S. Luke, x., 30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the thieves robbing and wounding the traveller.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that all the wounds of your soul may be healed.

The thieves represent the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, which, by tempting man to mortal sin, rob and wound him, leaving him, as far as his soul is concerned, dying.

I. Consider of what one mortal sin robs the soul :

i. All its grace ; for it cuts the soul off from GOD.
ii. All its merits ; for our works are pleasing to GOD only when done through His grace, and a soul in sin is without grace.

iii. Its liberty ; for "*whosoever committeth sin is the slave (δοῦλος) of sin*" (S. John, viii., 34) ; the only possible liberty is the service of CHRIST.

iv. Its peace ; for "*there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*" (Isaiah, lvii., 21.)

II. Consider how one mortal sin wounds the soul :

i. It wounds the Conscience, which, instead of speaking with GOD's Voice to the soul, merely echoes the desires of our own heart.

ii. It wounds the Memory ; which, instead of being a treasure-house of experiences to guide the soul, becomes a store-house of impure recollections, and a continual temptation to the soul.

iii. It wounds the Imagination ; which, instead of loving to picture the hopes of a heavenly land in the future, revels in the contemplations of sins of the past.

iv. It wounds the Intellect ; which, instead of finding its joy in gazing into and penetrating the mysteries of GOD's revelation, finds stumbling-blocks of doubt everywhere.

v. It wounds the Will ; which, instead of ruling the whole nature as the sovereign power of the soul, becomes the abject slave of the lower passions.

III. Consider the remedy—the man is helpless, *half dead*, but while there is life there is hope :

i. The Good Samaritan will bind up the wounds, cleansing and healing each in the Sacrament of Absolution.

ii. The wine ; first causing the wound to smart, but cleansing it, as sins are honestly confessed.

iii. Then the oil ; the soothing words of pardon, "*I absolve thee from all thy sins.*"

iv. Then the protection and guidance of the Church, in the fulfilment of CHRIST's charge, "*Take care of him.*"

Affections.—Realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; pray for true contrition ; resolve to do some special act of penitence.

THURSDAY AFTER THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST, V.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."—S. Luke, x., 30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Priest and Levite with cruel neglect passing the wounded man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may minister to JESUS in the Sacrament of His love.

I. Consider the picture here of our LORD's condescension:

i. He is the certain man who, leaving Jerusalem, in the Blessed Sacrament comes down to Jericho.

ii. He comes to heal the world's miseries, to feed its children with His own Body and Blood.

iii. He comes, knowing that He will fall among thieves.

II. Consider JESUS in the Blessed Sacrament:

i. *"They stripped him of his raiment"*; He stripped Himself when He emptied Himself of His glory. In the Holy Eucharist we see Him, indeed stripped of all manifestations of that glory.

ii. *"Wounded him"*; He is wounded in sacrilegious Communions:

iii. *"Departed, leaving him"*; how often is He left in unvisited churches; how often in the midst of the Eucharist do those, who call themselves His children, depart and leave Him!

iv. *"Half dead"*; by His own will deprived of the power of manifesting Himself, except to the hearts of His children.

III. Consider the three classes of communicants here represented:

i. The Priest, who celebrates the Holy Communion, but how often without any real care for the Sacred Victim!

ii. The Levite, the ordinary communicant, who looks upon our LORD for a moment in his Communion, but passes out into the world, and forgets Him.

iii. The Samaritan, the keeper, who recognizes his great privilege, and prays, LORD, abide with me.

IV. Consider what the Samaritan teaches you.

i. To bear the Sacred Guest tenderly to the inn of your own heart; is there room for Him in that inn?

ii. To bind up His wounds, pouring in wine and oil by your acts of reparation and adoration.

iii. To make your thank-offering, the two pence, to give alms at the Holy Eucharist.

Affections.—Realize your duty of caring for JESUS in the Holy Eucharist; pray that you may rightly prepare your heart to be His resting-place; resolve to do the Samaritan's part.

FRIDAY AFTER THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PASSION, VI.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."—S. Luke, x., 30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD on the Cross as the wounded man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have compassion on Him.

JESUS, by His life and death, having taught us the law of Christian love, tells us to go, and do likewise—putting us in His place, and, as He now suffers in His Members, putting Himself in the place of the wounded man, for His Passion in this sense lives on, and is the test of our love.

I. Consider the type here of the Incarnation, and Atonement :

- i. At the Incarnation our LORD went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.
- ii. *"Fell among thieves."* *"My house is the house of prayer : but ye have made it a den of thieves."* (S. Luke, xix., 46.)
- iii. *"Stripped him."* *"And they parted His raiment."* (S. Luke, xxiii., 34.)
- iv. *"Wounded him."* *"They pierced My Hands and My Feet."* (Psalm, xxii., 17.)
- v. *"Departed, leaving him half dead."* *"Beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."* (S. Luke, xxiii., 48.)

II. Consider how this treatment is perpetuated now ; for we are always at the place where JESUS lies on the Cross :

- i. The Priest preaching on the Passion, but his own heart untouched.
- ii. The Levite, the religious, meditating on the Passion, deliberately inspecting the wounds, yet not moved with compassion, not trying to suffer with Him. *"I looked for some to take pity, but there was none."* (Psalm, lxix., 20.)
- iii. The Samaritan, who had compassion, meeting JESUS with the Cross, and, like Simon of Cyrene, helping Him to bear it.

III. Consider how we may have compassion on our LORD :

- i. We may bind up His wounds by our acts of contrition.
- ii. We may pour in the wine of penitence ; it was for our penitence that He thirsted on the Cross ; the tears of penitence is the wine of angels.
- iii. We may bring oil in our acts of love and adoration.
- iv. We may set Him on our own beast ; showing forth in our life JESUS crucified, and caring for Him here in the Inn of this world, and then, on the glad morrow of eternity, we shall meet the wounded Man in that land which is very far off, recognizing Him by the wounds in His Hands and His Feet, beholding the King in His beauty, and hearing Him say, *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."* (S. Matt., xxv., 40.)

Affections.—Realize that you are called to have compassion on JESUS every day ; pray that you may fulfil this great duty ; resolve to recognize our LORD in His poor.

SATURDAY AFTER THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE DEMONIAC AT CAPERNAUM.

"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him."—S. Mark, i., 23-27.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene in the synagogue.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your whole spirit, and soul, and body may be sanctified.

I. Consider this scene as a type of the world, embracing the whole scale of humanity between its two extremes:

i. Our LORD; Man in his greatest perfection, *i. e.*, Man possessed by GOD, "*the Holy One of God*"; we see in Him man's highest possibility, man's true end.

ii. The demoniac; man in his greatest degradation, *i. e.*, man possessed by the devil, the unclean spirit; we see here what man may become.

iii. The rest of those present between these two extremes. We must realize the striking truth of the picture, that between these extremes we are perhaps wavering, towards one or other we are certainly tending.

II. Consider our LORD's treatment of the evil spirit:

i. The devil recognizes, and bears testimony to Him; "*What have we to do with Thee?*" *i. e.*, what is there in common between us?" between an unclean spirit and the Holy One?—nothing, indeed. "*Art Thou come to destroy us?*" Yes, to destroy the devil's reign in man is indeed the purpose for which JESUS came.

ii. "*Hold thy peace*"; our LORD ever rejected, and forbade all testimony to His Person from the devils.

iii. He commands the devil to come out of the man, and with a loud, but inarticulate cry, the unclean spirit obeys.

III. Consider the casting out:

i. "*When the unclean spirit had torn him*"; from S. Luke we learn that the man was not injured; this paroxysm of struggle is a law of spiritual life; there is no casting out the devil without it.

ii. It is our LORD's special work to drive out the devil from his abode in the human heart, that He Himself may fill it, and dwell there.

iii. At the beginning of His teaching in that synagogue they had been astonished, because He taught with authority (v. 22); now they were amazed that He acted with authority (v. 27), an authority which even the devils recognized.

Affections.—Realize the capacity and possibilities of your nature; pray our LORD to possess you entirely; resolve to accept the struggle necessary for the conquest of the evil that is in you.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TEN LEPROSERS

"And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."—S. Luke, xvii., 12-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the lepers crying for mercy.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your miseries may drive you to JESUS.

I. Consider the disease of leprosy:

i. It was the especial type of sin, separating from communion with GOD'S people, not because it was contagious, but because it was loathsome, and rendered the leper unclean.

ii. It was a living death, a gradual poisoning of the springs of life; so is sin.

iii. It was incurable by any human power; so is sin.

II. Consider the healing of the lepers:

i. The sense of their misery made them lift up their voices in that heartfelt prayer, "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*"

ii. Our LORD replied by sending them to the priests of His Church, to the ordinary means of grace.

iii. Their healing was the result of the obedient and faithful use of the means provided by GOD for all lepers.

III. Consider further:

i. In both our LORD's miracles of healing leprosy (the great type of sin), He sends the leper to the priest; thus showing that, in anticipating, He does not abrogate His own appointed means of grace.

ii. In both cases they are healed before reaching the priest; thus teaching that Contrition, the first step towards penitence, while it wins immediate forgiveness, does not dispense with Confession and Absolution.

iii. In penitence all three theological virtues are exercised and tested; thus Hope led them all to make their prayer for mercy, Faith made them all go to the priest as commanded, but they were all lacking in Love, except the one Samaritan, and it brought him back to our LORD's feet in thanksgiving; how often our misery and selfishness lead us to the exercise of faith and hope, but alas! how seldom GOD's goodness awakens our love and gratitude.

Affections.—Realize your need of healing; pray for mercy; resolve to use all the means of grace ordained by CHRIST in His Church

MONDAY AFTER FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THANKSGIVING, I.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks, and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?"—S. Luke, xviii., 15-19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD sorrowfully asking, “*Where are the nine?*”

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a grateful heart.

The great hindrance to progress in spiritual life is not temptation, for that rightly used is a help, but ingratitude. This is one great lesson of this miracle.

I. Consider the duty of thanksgiving:

i. It is a universal law; in nature the seas receive the rivers and return the clouds and rain, the earth receives the seed and dressing and returns the harvest; ungrateful man is the only exception; compare men's prayers and thanksgivings; the ten lepers are an example of earnest prayer, but only one returns to give thanks.

ii. Our life here is a preparation for life in heaven, but praise and thanksgiving will be the one occupation there; surely we ought to begin to practice it here.

iii. The Eucharist is the central act of the worship of the Church, and the spirit of the Eucharist is essentially the spirit of thanksgiving

II. Consider one common subject for thanksgiving, Life:

i. The gift of life itself; not mere existence like the lower animals, but the gift of immortality.

ii. The gift of all that is needed to sustain life, and to make it endurable; food for both body and soul.

iii. Protection from the dangers which continually threaten the life of the body, and more, from those daily temptations which attack and try to destroy the life of the soul.

III. Consider some of the ways in which we can practice thanksgiving:

i. With our lips; are our thanksgivings as earnest and as frequent as our prayers?

ii. In our lives; by devotion to God's service, by diligence in forwarding God's interests in the world.

iii. By our alms-deeds; do we give to God His share of what He has given to us?

iv. Above all, by our Eucharists; from these all other acts of thanksgiving derive their efficacy.

Affections.—Realize how much we lose by ingratitude; pray for a spirit of thankfulness; resolve to do some alms-deed to-day.

TUESDAY AFTER FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THANKSGIVING, II.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."—S. Luke, xvii., 15-20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD bestowing the further blessing of the healing of his soul on the grateful leper.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligence in thanksgiving.

But for this miracle, we should not have known the yearning of the heart of JESUS for thanksgiving.

Consider some of the things for which we ought to give thanks:

- i. For blessings which are common to all the human race.
- ii. For all blessings bestowed on our enemies.
- iii. For blessings and graces bestowed on souls that are now lost; there is no one else to thank GOD for these.
- iv. For personal blessings; life, health, &c., God's Providence, a long chain of graces since Baptism.
- v. For afflictions, sufferings, and humiliations; past, present, and to come. One "*Deo Gratias*" in adversity is worth a great many in prosperity.
- vi. For all the blessings GOD would have bestowed on us, if we had not hindered Him.
- vii. For having preserved us by His grace from sins that we have been near committing.
- viii. For preventing our words and deeds many, many times from giving the scandal they were in themselves calculated to do.
- ix. For sacramental graces, Baptism, Confirmation, Communions, Absolutions, &c.
- x. For having been led into the light of the Truth; that you are a Catholic.

Affections.—Realize GOD's goodness in your past life; pray that you may learn to love GOD more; resolve to devote a certain time to thanksgiving.

WEDNESDAY AFTER FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY.

"Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the Feet of Jesus, and wiped His Feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."—S. John, xii., 1-4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Mary anointing the Feet of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be diligent in ministering to His members on earth.

The Supper at Bethany brings before us one point of view from which we may regard our life and work.

I. Consider what they were doing at Bethany:

i. They were waiting to go up to Jerusalem to keep the feast.

ii. Is not this what we are doing in this world? waiting till the call comes for us, till we go up to the New Jerusalem to keep the feast, not that legal feast, but that of which it was at once the type and contrast, the Marriage Supper of the LAMB.

II. Consider where and how long they waited:

i. In the house of Simon the leper, at Bethany, almost within sight of the walls of Jerusalem, but with the Mount of Olives between, hiding them from view.

ii. Is not this world the house of the leper, man, the marks of sin all around, and yet almost within sight of the Holy City of God, with the mountain of our sin rising between, that mountain to which, if we have faith and penitence, we may say, *"Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea"* (S. Matt., xxi., 21), the Red Sea of the Precious Blood.

iii. How long had they to wait? *"Six days before the passover"*; the six days of the life of man before he reaches the Sabbath of rest; *"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work"* (Exod. xx., 9); *"The night cometh, when no man can work"* (S. John, ix., 4); *"That they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."* (Rev., xiv., 13.) Are we so working that our work will be finished when our life is?

III. Consider the action of Mary:

i. She anointed our LORD'S Feet with ointment; once before she had washed them with her tears—S. Luke, vii., 38; the washing of penitence must precede the Unction of thanksgiving; we must wash those feet with tears before we can anoint them with the ointment of good works.

ii. Our LORD'S Feet, the lowest Members of His Body, those which touched the earth; the Head now is in heaven, but the Feet still remain with us.

(a.) His Church, (b.) His poor, (c.) our own souls; our work whilst waiting here is to minister to each of these, washing away by our tears of penitence the dust of sin, and then anointing them by our works of charity.

iii. Of Mary's act our LORD said, *"She hath done what she could"* (S. Mark, xiv., 8); greater praise no one could have than this; how far could it be said of us?

Affections.—Realize that this world is but the waiting-room of eternity; pray that you may be found ready, when called, to go up to the Feast; resolve to do some act of almsgiving.

THURSDAY AFTER FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PEACE OFFERING.

"And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the Lord," &c.—Levit., vii., 11-22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Priest at the Altar giving the benediction after the offering of the Holy Eucharist, “The Peace of God,” &c.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so join in that offering that you may be partaker of that Peace.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament each represent some different aspect of our LORD’s Offering of Himself. The Peace-offering is the special and most perfect type of the Holy Eucharist.

I. Consider what the Peace Offering represents:

i. The Body of CHRIST, including His thoughts, work, and whole life, which are typified by the various parts of the body mentioned in Levit., iii.

ii. The Body of CHRIST; for it is a sweet savour offering, not only offered to GOD, but fed on by man, as the means of his Communion with GOD; but what can we share with GOD, nothing else is possible but the Body of CHRIST.

iii. The Holy Eucharist; for in it “Whole CHRIST” is offered, His Body, Soul, and Divinity, the merits of His Life and Passion; and the Eucharist is the only Food that man can share with GOD.

II. Consider the twofold object with which the Peace Offering might be offered:

i. For a thanksgiving; *i. e.*, for the Glory of GOD; and this is the first purpose in the oblation of the Eucharist.—Levit., vii., 12.

ii. For a vow; *i. e.*, for the needs of man; this is the second purpose of the Sacrament of the Altar.—Levit., vii., 16.

III. Consider who fed on the Peace Offering:

i. The offerer; in this the Peace Offering differs from all the other offerings, and is the special type of the Eucharist; the Communicant feeds, and finds satisfaction, that is if he communicates worthily.

ii. GOD has His part, that which was burnt on the Altar; so the offerer feasts with GOD, so the Communicant first has Communion with GOD in the Blessed Sacrament.

iii. The Priest has his part; the priest represents CHRIST in His official character as the Mediator, JESUS is the Priest in every Eucharist, and in it we communicate with Him.

iv. The Priest’s children have their part (*c. f.*, Levit., vii., 31, and Numb., xviii., 11); this represents the whole Church, all the members of CHRIST and children of GOD, whether in heaven, or on earth, or in paradise; in the Eucharist we communicate with the whole Body of CHRIST, we pray that “we, and all Thy *whole* Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion.” “With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name.”

IV. Consider that the Peace Offering must be eaten the same day, it was not to be left till the morning; or it might be eaten until the third day (*c. f.*, Levit., vii., 15-18); both “the morning” and “the third day” are types of the Resurrection, and this signifies that the Eucharist is the Food of this life, but in the morning of the Resurrection the faithful Communicant will pass from feeding on CHRIST beneath the Sacramental veils to seeing Him face to face, and feasting at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Affections.—Realize how near you are brought to the Spiritual World by each Communion; pray that your Peace Offering may be acceptable; resolve to make special remembrance of the faithful departed at your next Eucharist.

FRIDAY AFTER FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND, I.

"And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse Him."—
S. Mark, iii., 1-2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD gazing on the Pharisees and Scribes with indignation and sorrow.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never resist the motions of grace.

Our LORD here deals with the Pharisees and Scribes, and with the crippled man. No one comes in contact with CHRIST without being changed for better or for worse. The Pharisees reject and resist Him, and, hardened and filled with madness, leaving Him, they go forth to conspire to murder Him. The cripple, yielding himself to our LORD, goes forth healed.

Consider our LORD's dealing with the Scribes and Pharisees:

i. *"They watched Him";* why? to accuse Him, if He healed the man, to the Chief Priests for breaking the Sabbath; if He did not heal him, to the people as powerless and pitiless. They begin with malice, hoping to drive Him into a dilemma.

ii. *"But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man. . . . Rise up, and stand forth in the midst."* (S. Luke, vi., 8.) This was before they asked Him the question, *"Is it lawful?"* &c., recorded by S. Matthew. He knew their thoughts, therefore He bids the man stand forth, that by the sight of the maimed cripple He may appeal to their pity first, and if possible save them from the confusion He afterwards brings on them. It has no effect, and they ask the question, *"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?"* (S. Matt., xii., 10.)

iii. He answers by a question, *"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil?"* (v. 4). Thus He retorts the dilemma by shifting the argument, and lifting it up to a higher plane, where it is evident on which side the right lies. They had put the alternative of doing or not doing about which there might be some question; He shows that the alternative is between doing good or failing to do good, which is really doing evil.

iv. He gives them an illustration of their own practice of breaking the Sabbath for one sheep, thus exposing their malicious hypocrisy, and adds that *"it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."* (S. Matt., xii., 11-12.)

v. *"And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts"* (v. 5). With anger, indignation at their sin, but sorrow at their miserable spiritual state of hardness of heart. With a look our LORD called S. Peter to repentance, but that look of sorrow and indignation had no effect on them.

vi. He performs the cure, and thus calls GOD to witness to the true keeping of His own Sabbath.

vii. The result on the Pharisees is, that filled with madness, they conspire with their enemies, the Herodians, to murder our LORD; so wicked men, who disagree in all else, join in persecuting CHRIST.

Affections.—Realize the danger of prejudice; pray for a docile spirit; resolve to examine whether there is any doctrine of the Church which prejudice hinders you from accepting.

SATURDAY AFTER FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND, II.

“And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth....He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.”—S. Mark, iii., 3-5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the man standing forth before the congregation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always yield yourself to God's Will with loving obedience.

This poor cripple is an example of brave and unhesitating obedience to the instructions of our LORD.

I. Consider our LORD's dealings with him :

i. He found him in the synagogue engaged in the exercises of religion. He is in the right place for those who seek God's help; if he had not been there, he might have lost the blessing.

ii. Our LORD bids him stand forth in the midst. He obeys at once, although he has to stand forth in the midst of enemies, who say that it is wrong for him to be healed *then*. How hard it sometimes is to stand forth before the world, in opposition to its prejudices, in obedience to the teachings of CHRIST in His Church! How much faith and courage the man showed!

iii. He had to stand there some time while they were wrangling and arguing against his being healed then. It is easier to take one bold step in obedience, than afterward faithfully to retain, in face of opposition, the ground we have taken.

iv. He is told to stretch forth his hand, and obeys immediately. The very effort to do this was at once an act of faith, and an exercise of his will; for it was a command to do what seemed impossible, for his hand was withered, and in the attempt to obey he shows his perfect faith.

v. The result of faith and obedience is his healing.

II. Consider the man as a type of humanity :

i. The hand which was stretched forth to the forbidden fruit in Adam was withered and dried up, but, through the stretching forth on the Cross of the innocent hands of the Son of Man, it has been restored to man whole.

ii. The withered hand is found in the synagogue, which then was so barren of good works.

iii. The withered hand should be stretched forth according to our LORD'S command, in giving alms in defending the cause of right, and in prayer for pardon to God.

Affections.—Realize the need of using all opportunities of doing good lest our hand become withered; pray for courage to confess CHRIST before men; resolve to do some act of almsgiving.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TWO MASTERS.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters."—S. Matt., vi., 21-24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate God by His power supporting and controlling the universe.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always choose God's service.

I. Consider that it is a necessary consequence of the essential unity of man's nature that "*No man can serve two masters*":

i. There is an unity in the nature of man, though it has three parts, because it is a reflection of God, in Whom, though there are three Persons, we can conceive of no discord or division.

ii. This law is a necessary deduction from what precedes it; the light or eye of the soul is the conscience; if that be single, *i. e.*, reflecting only God's light, the whole being will be ruled by God; but if it be evil, *i. e.*, reflecting also man's own inclinations, the whole nature will be full of darkness, and how great will be the darkness of the passions and faculties, which have a natural tendency to evil, when the organ given to be their guide is evil!

iii. Your heart too cannot be divided in its affections; you can love God, and then you will love all things that are pleasing to Him; but you cannot love God and that which He hates, and which is at enmity to Him.

II. Consider that it is a necessary consequence of God's essential sovereignty that "*No man can serve two masters*":

i. God's dominion over man is essential as His Creator; He would cease to be God, if, being man's Creator, He ceased to be man's Master. We belong to God, Who is a Jealous God, and will not share His dominion with another.

ii. God's dominion over man is supreme; no one can have any rights over man except such as God has given them, and those rights must always be subordinate and subject to the rights of God; and then in recognizing them we are serving God.—Rom., xiii., 1.

iii. God's dominion over man is irresistible; we must either live under the empire of His love, or under that of His justice; we must either glorify His power by willing obedience, or glorify it by inevitable punishment.

III. Consider our service (*δουλεύειν* signifies not merely to serve, but to belong to, and obey entirely). God has told us that it is impossible to serve two masters, and yet how many, who profess to believe His Word, spend their lives in seeing how nearly they can approach this impossibility:

i. Self is the first master that claims our obedience; slavery to ease, luxury, a life of indulgence; self must be dethroned if God is to reign in us.

ii. The world next strives to rule us; money, power, a life of ambition; we must learn detachment from the world if we are to be faithful in the service of God.

iii. The devil comes last; captivity to habits of sin, a life of degradation, which is utterly incompatible with the service of Christ.

Affections.—Realize the folly of compromise in God's service; pray for singleness of heart; resolve to break from some habit which interferes with the service of God.

MONDAY AFTER FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FOWLS OF THE AIR.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"—S. Matt., vi., 26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the lark soaring upward, almost out of sight, and filling the air with its thrilling song.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of praise.

Two lessons the birds teach us: one—trustful happiness; the other—joyous praise.

I. Consider the lesson of trust:

i. The birds have no care for the future; their lives are an illustration of our LORD's words, "*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*" (S. Matt., vi., 34.)

ii. "*Your heavenly Father feedeth them*"; in the economy of nature, the provision made for the most insignificant creature is an evidence of GOD's wisdom, love, and power.

iii. "*Are ye not much better than they?*" Man is the crown and flower of creation, for whom all things were made, the express object of GOD's love! Is man, who has the greatest knowledge of GOD, alone to live a life of anxiety? is he to show the greatest distrust?

II. Consider the lesson of praise:

i. Life is in itself a joy, and the expression of joy is praise. How joyous is the mere existence of the birds! how their life is one continuous utterance of praise!

ii. The universe praises GOD by the fulfilment of His purpose; the birds praise Him by the fidelity with which they fill their place in creation.

iii. Man is called to lead this chorus of praise. Alas! how often is his voice the only discord in nature!

III. Consider the lark as an illustration of the law of praise:

i. The lark is not content, like the swallow, to skim the surface of the earth, but must struggle up ever higher and higher; so should it be with the soul of man.

ii. The lark, when on the earth, is hushed, but as soon as it mounts aloft it bursts into joyous song; so is it with the soul, it cannot really praise GOD without lifting itself up to Him.

iii. The lark sings not on the topmost boughs of trees, but, as though spurning everything rooted in earth, sings while it flies; so must it be with the soul.

Affections.—Make acts of faith and love; pray for a more trustful spirit; resolve to make an effort to praise GOD in your work, and with your lips, to-day.

TUESDAY AFTER FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LILIES OF THE FIELD.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."—S. Matt., vi., 28-29.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the exquisite symmetry and beauty of a lily.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may learn the lesson of humility and reality, which the flowers teach.

I. Consider "*how they grow*":

i. The growth is entirely from within, the development of the forces of their own being; so all real growth is the improvement of God's gifts to us, the development of our character.

ii. All that has been taken from the air and ground has been so appropriated by the flower as to become a part of itself; so only those faculties of our lower nature which have been animated by grace, and so assimilated to the Body of CHRIST, can be taken up in the resurrection life.

iii. "*Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*"; no, because a great part of his glory was what he wore, not what he was; was put on, and so laid aside when he passed from this world; so nothing should be an object of joy or care for us, that cannot so be made our own as to be carried with us into the world beyond.

II. Consider the variety of flowers as a type of the saints in glory :

i. No two species are quite alike; so the lives of no two saints on earth are identical, the characters of no two saints in heaven are exactly the same.

ii. Each flower has its own characteristic beauty, one a beauty of form in its delicate organs, another a beauty of colour in its wonderful tints; so each saint has his own individual glory, the result of the special discipline of his life on earth.

iii. Each flower, though different, is perfect; so in heaven the saints are perfect; the perfection is different, but in each it is the fulfilment of God's purpose.

III. Consider the unity of flowers as a type of the elect in heaven :

i. The beauty of one flower does not interfere with that of another; so amid all the glories of the saints there will be perfect harmony, no one interfering with the other.

ii. One flower does not necessarily live by the destruction of another; so each saint will have his own individual life, his own special joy, without lessening or destroying that of any other.

iii. All flowers drink in the same light, and air, draw their nourishment from the same ground, live to glorify the same God; so the saints drink in the same Light, and Life, and Love, and live to praise the same LORD.

Affections.—Realize the beauty of nature; pray that you may not waste your energies on things which perish in the using; resolve to cultivate more the powers of your soul.

WEDNESDAY AFTER FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

S. PAUL'S CROSS.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world....From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."—Gal. vi., 14-17.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul cheerfully bearing the trials and sorrows of his life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love of the Cross.

That we may understand these words, it is important that we should consider what went to make up S. Paul's Cross, what it was in which he gloried. Every one talks of the Cross, but too often it is but the jewelled imitation of the Cross of Christ!

I. Consider some elements of S. Paul's Cross:

i. Temperament: He was naturally sensitive, melancholy, passionate, feeling deeply the desertion of friends; for he loved with his whole soul, and loved many. Just the temperament to feel exquisite suffering.

ii. Mental: He was distrusted and hated by the Judaizing party in the Church, which comprehended most of his own countrymen; hunted about from place to place, he carried his life in his hand; and had to see his work often hindered or spoiled by them; and, worse than all, his own converts continually vexing him by their instability.

iii. Bodily: He had weak health, contemptible appearance, and had to endure persecutions of all kinds; scourgings, stonings, shipwrecks, and, above all, a thorn in the flesh, probably some humiliating temptation.

iv. Its endurance: This lasted over thirty years. Well might he say, "*I die daily!*" (I. Cor., xv., 31); "*Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ; which is far better.*" (Phil., i., 23.)

II. Consider further:

i. He gloried not in his successes, but in his difficulties; not in his powers, but in his infirmities; not in his triumphs, but in his crosses. Is this so with us?

ii. With all these crosses S. Paul did the greatest work for CHRIST. Let us realize that obstacles and checks to our work are often its greatest helps. "*Crux scala cali.*"

iii. "*The marks of the Lord Jesus*": the scars received in his warfare; for most of his cares, sufferings, and temptations, were the result of persecution for righteousness sake. The days of open persecution for most of us may have passed, but there is one who will never cease to persecute us, the devil! The struggle against temptation, the struggle to pray, the struggle to do right, what does it leave? If we are faithful, the marks of the LORD JESUS.

iv. "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" (Rev., ii., 10.) It is of no use carrying the Cross unless we carry it to the grave; we must endure to the end.

Affections.—Realize the blessings of the Cross; pray for perseverance in bearing the Cross; resolve to take up more cheerfully some special cross.

THURSDAY AFTER FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ESTHER.

"And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request."—Esther, vii., 2-3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the king extending to Esther the golden sceptre.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so prepare yourself to come into GOD's Presence that you may always find mercy and grace to help in time of need.

I. Consider the danger which threatened Esther:

i. It had its origin in the malice of one, Haman, the adversary and hereditary enemy of the Jews (v. 6); Haman is a type of our enemy the devil (the adversary *διάβολος*), powerful, unscrupulous, cunning, ever plotting the overthrow of those who, like Mordecai, will not bow down to him.

ii. By Haman's machinations the sentence of death had been passed on her, and on all she loved (chap. iii.); by the devil's seduction of our first parents the sentence of death has been passed on all our race.—Gen., iii., 19.

II. Consider the means by which Esther met the danger:

i. There was but one who could help, but one more powerful than Haman, the king, and so she prepared herself by a three days' fast to go in to implore his aid; so with us, there is but One Stronger than the strong man armed, our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, to Him we must go.

ii. She invites the king to the banquet which she has prepared; this brings before us one aspect of the Holy Eucharist, that it is the invitation of the Church, and of the individual soul to the Royal Bridegroom to leave the inner Court of His Heavenly Palace, and to come to the Eucharistic banquet prepared in His Church.

III. Consider Esther's prayer at the banquet:

i. *"Let my life be given me at my petition"*; where better than at the Eucharist, where we receive the Bread of Life, can we make this prayer, that amid all the various forces threatening the soul with destruction, the King may give us that eternal life, which is in Himself, and which He imparts to all who faithfully feed on Him.

ii. *"And my people at my request"*; we can at the Blessed Sacrament not only seek help for our own needs, but for those of others. Here then we have the type of that work of grace and power, Eucharistic Intercession.

IV. Consider the result of Esther's prayer:

i. The entire overthrow of Haman, and destruction of his wicked schemes; how completely a good Communion defeats all the assaults of Satan on our souls.

ii. Permission to fight for their lives, and with the King on their side, not freedom from strife; how perfect a picture of Christian life; our Communions do not save us from the necessity of fighting, but they give us grace, because the King is on our side, to have victory and to triumph over all our enemies.

Affections.—Realize the dangers of the soul from the malice of the devil; pray Esther's prayer, *"Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request"*; resolve in your next Communion to seek aid against what you feel to be your special danger.

FRIDAY AFTER FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HOLY CROSS.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—Gal. vi., 14.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Empress S. Helena searching for our LORD'S Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love of the Cross:

Among the lesser festivals of our Church are the Invention of the Cross, May 3d, commemorating Queen Helena's discovery of the sacred relic at Jerusalem, A. D., 326; and the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14th, commemorating its being set up in the new Church of the Resurrection, A. D., 335.

I. Consider the finding of the Holy Cross:

i. It was with great labour and difficulty that S. Helena at last found the Cross; for the spot where it was buried had been hidden under heaps of rubbish, and a temple to Venus had been built over it. The buildings had to be pulled down, and the rubbish all cleared away.

ii. So we must search for our Cross amid the toils of daily life; much will have to be removed, which the world has placed around us, before the Cross which is to sanctify us is found.

iii. Some would say wait till crosses come; do not seek them, they will only come too soon! Yes, they may come, but if we are not seeking for them, they may not be recognized as *the* Cross, chosen for us by God, and so may be borne grudgingly, or cast aside. How often this happens!

II. Consider the Exaltation of the Cross:

i. Nine years after the Cross was removed to the Great Church of the Resurrection, which Constantine had ordered to be built at Jerusalem, and was solemnly set up there as an object of honour and veneration.

ii. After we have found our Cross, learned what is to be the great trial of our life, it takes perhaps years, and many a hard battle with self, before the Cross is lifted into its true position in our life, looked upon no longer with dislike, but reverenced as coming from the Hand of God, honoured as our share of the Cross of CHRIST.

III. Consider the carrying of the Cross:

i. In A. D., 614, Jerusalem was taken by Chosroes II., King of Persia, and the part of the Cross there was carried away by him, and remained in his possession for fourteen years; when Heraclius, the Emperor, having overthrown the Persians, recovered it, and humbly restored it to its place in Jerusalem.

ii. Sometimes we forget to guard our hearts, to keep alive our love of the Cross, and our enemy prevails against us, taking possession of our heart, and our Cross is thrown aside, and it may not be till after years of weary struggle that we regain the mastery, and humbly restore our Cross to its former position in our life.

iii. Then with patience, love and perseverance, we have to carry the Cross till the end comes, and we lay it down in death, to exchange it for the crown of life.

Affections.—Realize the impossibility of following Christ without taking up the Cross; pray for perseverance in Cross bearing; resolve to do some definite act of self denial.

SATURDAY AFTER FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RICH FOOL.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."—S. Luke, xii., 16-22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich man in eternity looking back upon his life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may lay up treasure in heaven.

I. Consider the occasion of the Parable:

i. In the midst of a solemn and important discourse one of the hearers showed how little attention he was giving to our LORD's Words by the request, *"Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me"* (v. 13).

ii. The man had probably been wronged, but this was not the time to have intruded a matter of such merely worldly interest.

iii. *"Beware of ALL covetousness"* (v. 15); (Best MSS. insert $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma$) and this sin consists quite as much in undue attachment to what belongs to us, as in longing for what belongs to others; this seems to have been this man's danger.

iv. *"For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he posseseth"* (v. 15); i. e., a man's life ($\gamma\omega\nu$) does not consist in his living ($\beta\iota\omega\varsigma$); our LORD was speaking of the things pertaining to that life "by which we live," and this man intrudes the wrongs of that life, "which we live."

II. Consider the rich man's soliloquy:

i. *"The ground....brought forth plentifully"*; he obtained his riches without fraud, and by the especial blessing of God; he ought therefore to have been the more sensible of God's claims on him.

ii. *"I have no room where to bestow by fruits"*; God's barns, the bosoms of the needy, the houses of the widows, the mouths of orphans, surely are not full;—thou art but His Steward.

iii. In his wisdom he thinks he has hit on the best scheme, and then he will enjoy his goods for many years.

III. Consider God's view of such a life:

i. *"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee"*; fool opposed to his own opinion of his wisdom and foresight; this night to the many years on which he was counting.

ii. The soul, which he had been congratulating on its possessions, required of him. Death cuts him off from those goods, which he had been making his living, and they go to another; while the true life, which death cannot touch, he has never cultivated.

iii. *"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself"*; there are two poles of attraction, God and Self; to which are we tending, for which are we laying up treasure?

Affections.—Realize the vanity of this world's possessions; pray that you may be found rich toward God; resolve to accept cheerfully any loss of earthly goods which may befall you.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON, I.

"And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her."—S. Luke, vii., 11-13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the meeting of the two crowds, the followers of the Living and the followers of the dead!

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always be found on our LORD's side.

I. Consider the meeting of:

i. Life and Death; JESUS, THE LIFE—S. John, xiv., 6; the young man dead; our LORD had foreknown this meeting from all eternity; it was no accident; the meetings of the soul with JESUS are never accidental. Although compassion for the widow seems the most prominent motive of the miracle, it was not; the spiritual awakening of the dead man was the primary cause, compassion only secondary.

ii. Mourning and comfort; *Mater dolorosa, Christus Consolator*; “*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*” (S. Matt., v., 4.) The mother's prayer is heard, he could not pray for himself; so now there are some too dead in sin to pray for themselves, for whom a mother's prayer may avail to bring the needed aid, though not to compel its acceptance.

iii. The Church and the world; JESUS and His followers, and the citizens of Nain escorting their dead to the grave with all the pomp of a funeral procession; he was a young man; the Church of JESUS and the world both claim the heart of the young; the One will lead him to life eternal, the other to the grave; we have each to choose.

II. Consider the Raising of the young man:

i. The touch of the Son of GOD alone can communicate life to our dying nature; He touches not the man, but the bier, like the Staff of Elisha laid on the dead child; so He touches us through the wood of His Cross, and through the sacraments of grace.

ii. The Voice of JESUS alone can wake the dead, can summon to life those in the sleep of spiritual death. “*Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*” (v. 14).

iii. “*He that was dead sat up, and began to speak*” (v. 15); and what did he say? We are not told, but by his words he let the bearers know their work was over, that he wanted them no longer; so ought the awakened sinner to speak to dismiss those companions who were leading him to the grave of eternal death; so to speak as to prove that he is indeed alive once more.

iv. “*And He delivered him to his mother*” (v. 15); faint shadow of the day of the General Resurrection, when His great “*Arise*” shall have awakened all the dead; when He shall deliver to His Beloved, their Mother, all who sleep in Him; for “*Jerusalem which is above....is the Mother of us all.*” (Gal., iv., 26.)

III. Consider the historical antitype of this scene in the fourth century:

i. S. Augustine as a young man, dead in sin, and by his evil habits carried almost to the grave of eternal death.

ii. Monica, his saintly mother, following him, weeping and praying.

iii. His conversion, his mother's joy, and the Church's gain.

Affections.—Realize the misery of the bondage of sin; pray for conversion for some one whom you fear does not pray for himself; resolve always to choose CHRIST.

MONDAY AFTER SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON, II.

"And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain ; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her."—S. Luke, vii., 11-13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD stopping the funeral procession.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never forfeit your heavenly citizenship.

The whole scene is an acted parable, which represents what was to occur continually in the world from that time, what is going on around us now !

I. Consider the picture :

i. On the N. W. slope of Hermon, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, one of the few spots mentioned in the Gospels which can be identified with certainty, is a little city, from its situation called Nain, *i. e.*, Beautiful ; this represents heaven, the beautiful city of God, of which in Baptism we were made citizens, "*For your citizenship is in heaven*" (Phil., iii., 20) ; "*Upon the north-side lieth the city of the great King.*" (Ps., xlvi., 2.)

ii. Nain had but one gate, and one means of approach, that up which JESUS toiled ; so too heaven, the strait gate, and the narrow way.

iii. The young man ; one dead in sin ; by an act of mortal sin he has lost his citizenship, he has left the city, carried out to be buried ; how many thus in the world.

iv. The bearers ; the evil passions, and habits of sin, which are hurrying him to destruction.

v. The widowed mother ; what a touching picture of desolation ! a widow, she has already buried one she loved, and now she follows her only son to the grave ; this typifies the Church, a widow in that her Bridegroom has been taken from her ; and, like her LORD, loving each soul committed to her charge, as if her only child, she follows weeping, representing the Church following her erring children with entreaties, exhortations, and tears, and interceding for them.

vi. Much people of the city was with her ; the saints and angels join their intercessions with hers ; they follow with their prayers those leaving the city, they meet those entering it.

II. Consider the raising of the dead :

i. He was beyond the help of all but One, JESUS meets him, by no accident, it is the crisis in his history determined from eternity ; a type of what is now always going on ; for JESUS and His followers are ever going up that hill on which is the Beautiful city, and at every moment meeting some who are being carried out to be buried.

ii. He stops the bier ; so by some extraordinary call, a mission, Lent, a sickness, our LORD now stops one in a course of sin, stops for awhile the bearers, the attacks of temptations, time to make a resolution ! Woe to you if they go on their way again to the grave, "*Young man, Arise !*" the touch gives power to obey.

iii. The stages of spiritual resurrection :

(a.) "*Sat up*" ; spiritual growth is gradual, not saints all at once ; not at once can he stand and walk, but better than lying helpless, dead !

(b.) "*Began to speak*" ; prayer, confession of sin, &c.

(c.) "*Delivered him to his mother*" ; JESUS arouses the soul, but having quickened the flame of life, delivers it to its mother, the Church, to keep her rules, to be fed by her Sacraments, and under her care to return to the city.

iv. The return journey ; full of joy, yet up-hill work, till the city is reached ; but with JESUS and His Church to help.

Affections.—Realize the deadly consequences of sin ; pray for pardon and power to arise ; resolve to keep strictly all the rules of the Church.

TUESDAY AFTER SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE THREE RESURRECTIONS.

"The dead are raised."—S. Luke, vii., 22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the widow's son rising from the dead at our LORD's command.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be preserved from mortal sin.

Our Blessed LORD, while on earth, raised three from the dead: the daughter of Jairus—S. Mark, v., 41; the widow's son at Nain—S. Luke, vii., 14; and Lazarus—S. John, xi., 43. There are three sorts of life and of death, spoken of in Holy Scripture; three states of spiritual death, and three miracles of resurrection from the dead.

I. Consider the three kinds of life of which our LORD is the Disposer:

i. The natural life of the body; it is His gift, the moment of its withdrawal is in His Hand, its disposal is His.

ii. The spiritual life of the soul; the life of grace, this, too, is His gift, but its termination must be our wilful act, or it will lead to

iii. The life of both body and soul in glory; the reward for the faithful use of the other two, the gift of GOD.

II. Consider the three kinds of death of which our LORD holds the keys:

i. The death of the body; He can and will raise it again.—Rev., i., 18. Of this He always speaks lightly.—S. Matt., x., 28.

ii. The death of the soul in sin; He alone can raise it again, and this power, the keys of this death, He committed to His Church on the first Easter Day in the Sacrament of Absolution.—Eph., ii., 1.

iii. The death of both body and soul in hell; against this He warns us most solemnly.—S. Mark, ix., 43-48. This death, the result of our wilful choice, is eternal. The key which locks that door is in His power.—Rev., ix.; 1.; xx., 1.

III. Consider the three resurrections from the dead, as representing three states of spiritual death, from all of which CHRIST can raise the soul:

i. The maid in the house, just dead; those dead by internal consent to mortal sin.

ii. The young man at Nain, carried forth to be buried; those with whom the sin has proceeded forth, from the house of the heart, into outward act.

iii. Lazarus, four days buried, and corrupt; those with whom the sin has been of long continuance, and evil habits have wrapped and bound the sinner, as the grave clothes did Lazarus.

Affections.—Thank GOD for the gift of absolution; pray that you may never consent to mortal sin; resolve to make a special act of contrition for some one great sin in your past life.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ELIJAH AND ELISHA.

"And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee. And they two went on."—II. Kings, ii., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Elisha following his master from place to place.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for faithfulness in following CHRIST.

The closing scene in the life of the great prophet of Carmel, his last journey with his faithful disciple Elisha, is a most beautiful picture of the Christian's life, and of his relation to his LORD and Master in time and in eternity. Elijah here is a type of CHRIST, Elisha of ourselves, their journey together of our pilgrimage through life.

I. Consider the journey:

i. It began at Gilgal, where the reproach was rolled away and the broken covenant renewed by the rite of circumcision—Joshua, v., 9; so our life with JESUS begins at Baptism, when our sins are rolled away, and we enter into covenant with Him as our Master and our All.

ii. Thence they went to Bethel, where Jacob had his vision and saw the ladder joining heaven and earth, so from Baptism the soul is led on to the Holy Eucharist, the Extension of the Incarnation, the Ladder by which earth and heaven are joined, where the soul not only has its visions of heaven, but is sacramentally united to Heaven's King, there it would willing remain, but the soul must be tried, and so—

iii. Thence they go to Jericho, the city under the curse, the type of the world; we must pass through the world after being strengthened with those two great sacraments, and with JESUS as our Companion and Guide, better to be with Him in temptation and danger than without Him in shameful peace with Satan. Let us say, “*Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water*” (S. Matt., xiv., 28); “the waves of this troublesome world.”

iv. And from Jericho to Jordan, the boundary of the promised land which the Israelites had to pass to enter on their inheritance; this typifies the river of death through which we pass to everlasting life; our LORD standing by our bedside at death, with Him we pass the river.

v. At each place Elijah says, “*Tarry here, I pray thee*”; how many are the obstacles and discouragements in Christian life, and truly the hardest of all, those which seem to come from GOD Himself when He seems to hide His Face, and we are constrained to cry, “*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me*” (Ps., xxii., 1); even when we are most desirous of serving Him this is the special temptation of the faithful soul, GOD trying its trust in Him. He says, “*Tarry here*,” that we may say “*I will not leave Thee*.” He says, “*Let Me go*,” that we may say, “*I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me*.” (Gen., xxxii., 26.) He tries our faith as He tried the faith of the Woman of Canaan, that like her we may persevere and win the reward. “*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*.” (S. Matt., xv., 28.)

vi. But the special thought, the antiphon of the whole history is in the words “*And they two went on*”; the companionship of the soul with CHRIST, obstacles and difficulties, but with Him always overcome until Jordan is passed and then no longer “*Tarry here*,” but “*Ask what I shall do for Thee*” (v. 9); no longer “*Tarry here*,” for in that pure land of light and love “*they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*” (Rev., xiv., 4). Who? those who followed Him in the path of difficulty and suffering on earth.

Affections.—Realize that the path of suffering is the road to glory; pray for closer fellowship with CHRIST; resolve never to let obstacles discourage you in following Him.

THURSDAY AFTER SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

JESUS OUR PHYSICIAN.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."—Isaiah, lxxi., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Good Samaritan ministering to the wounded man, whom He found by the wayside between Jericho and Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that our Blessed LORD will heal you.

I. Consider our LORD as the Good Physician:

i. His Skill is infinite; He knows how great are our ailments, for He has borne them all; He can never be deceived as to our needs, none are beyond His power to cure.

ii. His Love is boundless; it has led Him to identify Himself with us in our sufferings; He has indeed compassion, for He suffers with us.

iii. His Patience is inexhaustible; though we will not follow His advice He never leaves us, but ministers to our diseases as often as we will allow Him.

II. Consider of what He is the Physician:

i. Of the Body; He knows its infirmities and pains, for He took upon Him a Body in which He suffered infinite pain.

ii. Of the Soul; He created it, knows all its powers and all its dangers.

iii. Of the Spirit; He experienced in Gethsemane the struggle to pray, on Calvary the sense of desolation; He can minister to the bruised spirit.

III. Consider His treatment:

i. He cleanses and cures us by His own most Precious Blood.

ii. He strengthens us with the Food of His own most Sacred Body.

iii. He bestows on us the Unction of His grace to meet all our needs.

IV. Consider our duty to Him:

i. To seek Him in all our diseases.

ii. To follow implicitly His directions.

iii. To thank Him for all His care.

Affections.—Realize the insidious character of the disease of sin; pray, "Speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed"; resolve to be more obedient to His commands.

FRIDAY AFTER SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SOLOMON'S CHOICE.

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee," &c.—I. Kings, iii., 5-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the boy King on the threshold of his Empire making his choice.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have grace to fulfil God's purpose for you.

I. Consider Solomon's Vision:

i. The day of excitement has drawn to its close, and he has time to think! He sees before him a mighty kingdom, all the difficulties of government, and his own youth.

ii. Then comes the Vision, and he is allowed to make a choice; different possibilities float before him,—a victorious king, one of the world's heroes; a prosperous king, riches; a popular king, fame; a long reign; his own name exalted, his people crushed, it may be to supply his ambition; just one other view, a *good* king, reigning for his people's good, they happy, contented, prosperous, and this he chooses, truly a kingly choice!

II. Consider Solomon's Choice:

i. His humility; "*I am but a little child*" (v. 7); he recognizes his vocation, and simply asks that he may be faithful to its duties, and have those gifts necessary to their fulfilment.

ii. And first Wisdom; that he may rule wisely (not science), his prayer is unselfish, that his people may reap the benefit of his choice.

iii. And to this God adds riches, and long life (vv. 13-14); an anticipation of the Christian precept, "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (S. Matt., vi., 33.)

III. Consider the application of this history to ourselves:

i. Wherever we are in age we stand looking forward to great possibilities, to grand schemes for life, and we have the promise, "*Ask, and it shall be given you.*" (S. Matt., vii., 7.) What do we ask for?

ii. Are we humble, recognizing the difficulties in our path, and our own weakness?

iii. Is the object of our life to do our duty in our vocation? Is our prayer that we may have wisdom and guidance, so that we may fulfil God's purpose for us? or is it merely for great schemes of future worldly success that we ask God to lend His power?

iv. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*," &c. Is this our motto? have we faith enough to make it so? Solomon's prayer was unselfish, is ours?

Affections.—Realize God's promise that if we seek His glory all needful for us will be given; pray that you may be true to God's Call; resolve to say the Collect for Whitsun-Day for guidance.

SATURDAY AFTER SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them," &c.—S. Matt., xvii., 1-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the astonished apostles gazing upon the glories of the Transfiguration.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be so diligent in meditation that you may see some rays of the glory of CHRIST'S Kingdom.

I. Consider the preparation for the Transfiguration:

i. S. Peter's Confession; they must have learned to believe in our LORD'S Divinity before they could come to see some of its glory; the eye of the soul must be trained by faith to gaze into GOD's revelation.

ii. The announcement of the Passion; this immediately follows the acknowledgment of CHRIST'S GODHEAD, that He is also truly Man, and as such, "*obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.*" (Phil., ii., 8.) We must learn that there is but one way to that glory, the path of suffering.

iii. S. Luke says, "*eight days after*"; S. Matthew, "*six days.*" Probably after six days they went apart, and kept watch till the eighth day, waiting through the Jewish Sabbath; the six days of labour represent our life, the seventh our rest in the grave, the eighth the day of resurrection, when we shall see the glories of the kingdom of heaven, and be partakers of that glory for ever, but the six days of toil before the mountain top is reached must come first.

II. Consider the manifestation of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity on the Mount:

i. "*As He prayed*" (S. Luke, ix., 29), our LORD was transfigured; here we have the manifestation of His Humanity by prayer, of His Divinity by His transfiguration.

ii. The Voice which said, "*This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him,*" was the Voice of God the Father.

iii. The Cloud which overshadowed them was the symbol of the HOLY GHOST.

III. Consider further:

i. Moses and Elias appeared "*and spake of His decease*" (*Ἐξοδον*) (S. Luke, ix., 31); so they learn to regard the Passion and Death as indeed the only way out of the bondage of the Egypt of this world, the only way into the glory of the heavenly Canaan.

ii. The exclamation of S. Peter, "*It is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles*" (S. Luke, ix., 33), which was rebuked, teaches us that we must never be contented to stand still, that every manifestation of our LORD's glory in this world must only make us more desirous to enter that land of glory, which lies beyond the grave; "*For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*" (Heb., xiii., 14.)

iii. "*They saw no man, save Jesus only.*" (S. Matt., xvii., 8.) This, taken together with the fact that "*His Face did shine as the sun*" (v. 2), reminds us that as, when the sun arises in his splendour, the stars all disappear; so if we are holding in over-estimation any individual minister of CHRIST, it is a sign that we are not apprehending the full glory of CHRIST.

Affections.—Realize that all glimpses of our LORD's glory here are to prepare you for the Cross; pray that you may be more detached from the transitory glory of this world; resolve to be more faithful in meditation.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

VOCATIONS.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."—Eph., iv., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul in his imprisonment, chained to a soldier, writing these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may walk worthy of your Vocation.

I. Consider these words as pointing the path of safety between two dangers:

- i. The danger of the common habit of living in the future, castle building, day dreaming. There is a future in which we may build, as much as we please, even now, but it is a future beyond the grave.
- ii. The danger of the habit of some of living in the past—either bewailing its mistakes, or exaggerating its successes.

iii. Both these temptations, if indulged in, paralyze all practical work. The true remedy, the path of safety, is pointed out by S. Paul, to act in the present, to walk worthy of your present vocation.

II. Consider the law of God's Providence:

- i. Our vocation is that state of life to which God has called us.
- ii. Besides the great vocation of our life, there are lesser vocations; indeed, whatever be our circumstances, however adverse, they are God's ordering, unless our own sinful choice.
- iii. We are to realize the dignity of present calls, however limited our sphere of work may be, and we are to look upon them as the call of God.

III. Consider our responsibility for the present:

i. S. Paul was a prisoner at Rome; he reminds the Ephesians of this; he might have wasted his time in vain regrets that his usefulness was, at least for a time, stopped; he might have spent it in making great plans for the future, if he were released; or in feeding upon the glories of past success.

ii. S. Paul did the best he could under the circumstances; since he could not preach to crowds, he taught individuals; he recognized his imprisonment as a vocation of God, and tried to improve it, and the result was, perhaps, his greatest work, the foundation of the Roman Church—the reaching, through those he taught, the very palace of Cæsar.

iii. So we, if held back from great things, should do as perfectly as possible the little duties within our reach, and so walk worthy of the vocation where-with we are called.

Affections.—Realize your responsibility for little opportunities; pray that you may have grace to do present duties; resolve to accept checks and difficulties as God's calls.

MONDAY AFTER SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LOWEST ROOM.

"And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms ; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room ; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him ; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place ; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room ; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher ; then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."—S. Luke, xiv., 7-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a light-house built on a rock withstanding every storm.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of humility.

This parable warns us against two dangers, points out two very common mistakes in the spiritual life, which spring from the roots of pride and sloth.

I. Consider the danger of taking a higher position in religious profession than our inner life warrants :

i. Some expect to step at once from worldliness to an advanced position in spiritual life. They are bidden, called by the Voice of the Bridegroom, but not to take the highest seats ; they go on for awhile, and then their spiritual life seems to crumble away, and leave them worse than before ; they had no foundation, or rather the foundation was marred by unrepented, unforgiven sins of the past ; the edifice of many a spiritual life falls, when the winds and waves of temptation beat against it, because it is built on a foundation of sand.

ii. Ostentation in ritual and external devotion without that inner spirit of recollection and love, which is the very life of ritual, and without which it is but the gaudy trappings of a corpse ; e. g., the sign of the cross made conspicuously, but no cross borne patiently ; the humblest attitude of devotion, but the thoughts far from God.

iii. Always talking about the Church and religion, when in our heart and life we are loving, and living for, something before God ; or intense activity in parochial work, so as to be reputed pillars of the Church, but prayers and other devotions crowded out.

iv. Consider the remedy for this danger : *"When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room,"* i. e., the chamber of penitence ; for that is the only foundation on which it is safe to build ; that foundation should be at the bottom of all our life, the spirit of penitence ; examine whether the act of penitence by which you first turned to God was thorough.

II. Consider the danger of beginning on a good foundation, in the lowest room, but stopping there, holding back from what God is calling you to through a false humility, which is but hidden sloth ; e. g., more frequent means of grace, a higher standard of devotional life, work for God and His Church ; hearing the command, *"Friend, go up higher,"* but neglecting it.

Affections.—Realize the importance of a good foundation ; pray for diligence and humility ; resolve to take every step forward in a spirit of penitence.

TUESDAY AFTER SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LAW OF PROGRESS.

“When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room ; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher.”—S. Luke, xiv., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD appearing to S. Mary Magdalene on Easter-Day, and saying, *“I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.”* (S. John, xx., 17.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may persevere in Christian progress.

These words, *“Friend, go up higher,”* give us the law of our life ; for here there is no standing still ; it is either advance or retrogression.

I. Consider this law as taught by Moses in the Old Testament :

i. In the time of their greatest difficulty, while camping at Baal-zephon, the foe behind, the sea in front, *“the Lord said unto Moses . . . speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”* (Ex., xiv., 15.)

ii. The first step, that which delivered them from their old enemies, the Egyptians, was to pass through the Red Sea ; so with us our only road to freedom from the sins which have enslaved us, lies through the Red Sea of the Precious Blood, that torrent which flowed from our LORD’s riven Side, and is applied to the sinner’s soul in the Sacraments.

iii. The forty years’ wandering in the wilderness, like our life, was a *going up*, till at last the promised land was reached.

II. Consider this law as taught by our LORD on Easter-Day :

i. It was when JESUS had just risen from the dead, on His first recorded appearance, that He sent S. Mary Magdalene to say to His disciples, *“I ascend unto My Father.”*

ii. His Resurrection typifies the first act of true penitence, by which the soul rises from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

iii. Resurrection is an *act* accomplished at a definite moment ; but Ascension is a *state* of progress ; *lit.*, *“I am ascending,”* not *“I ascend.”* (*ἀναβαίνω*, pres. tense, not only admits but requires this translation) ; so after we have by our first act of penitence risen from the dead, the rest of our life here should be our Ascension ; daily nearer to GOD.

III. Consider the words, *“Friend, go up higher”* :

i. They are addressed only to the one who has voluntarily taken the lowest seat, whom JESUS finds in the Chamber of penitence.

ii. Our LORD calls him, Friend ; *lit.*, Loved one. (*φίλε*, not *έταῖρε*, as in S. Matt., xx., 13 ; xxii., 12 ; xxvi., 50) : it is only those whose sins are washed away by penitence, only those who are in grace, who are His loved ones.

iii. *Then* our LORD says go up higher (the same word that He uses of Himself above, *προσανάβηθι*) ; we cannot begin to ascend, until by penitence we have put away our sins.

Affections.—Realize the necessity of penitence as the foundation of all progress ; pray for the grace of humility ; resolve to make some effort to take a definite step forward in your spiritual life.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HEALING OF THE DROPSY.

"And behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer Him again to these things.—S. Luke, xiv., 2-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD reasoning with the lawyers and Pharisees.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in your judgments you may not be blinded by selfishness.

I. Consider the action of the Pharisees:

i. They censured our LORD for breaking the law by healing on the Sabbath day the man with the dropsy.

ii. They refused to do acts of charity, the opportunity for which offered, on the plea that the law forbade all work on the Sabbath day.

iii. They loosed their own cattle to lead them away to watering on the Sabbath day—S. Luke, xiii., 15; they did work which their own self-interest required, on the plea of necessity, *i. e.*, of self-interest.

iv. The Sabbath too was a favourite day for their festal entertainments; indeed it was often turned into a day of riot and excess in this way; but their plea was, that this was not work, *i. e.*, pleasure.

v. They would rescue from suffocation *their own* son, or even their ox, if either were to fall into a pit of water on the Sabbath day; but they grudged that a fellow creature, in whom they had no especial interest, should be delivered on the Sabbath day from the water which was choking him. (The true reading here is *vιός*, not *ὅντος*; son, not ass; the argument is not from the less to the greater, but from the difference of their judgment in regard to things which were their own, and things in which they had no particular interest.)

II. Consider that our LORD did not break the law in healing the man, because He was obeying that higher law of charity, which abrogated the lower law of ritual; for, "*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*" (Rom., xiii., 10.)

III. Consider the lessons here:

i. How easy it is sternly to condemn a course of action in others, which does not in any way affect ourselves; but how uncharitable!

ii. How easy it is to justify a course of conduct, actuated by the same or even less worthy motives, when our own self-interest is affected; but how unjust!

iii. We are warned of the danger of compounding with our consciences for one class of sin, to which we are inclined, by severely condemning another class of sin, to which we have no temptation.

iv. We are taught that the law of Charity is supreme, superseding all lesser laws; but that self-interest is no excuse for breaking any law.

Affections.—Realize how self-interest warps our judgment; pray for a Spirit of Charity in judging others; resolve to be more severe in your judgment of self.

THURSDAY AFTER SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE RESTING PLACE OF JESUS AND THE SOUL.

"And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."—S. Luke, xxii., 11-13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD giving His disciples their first Communion.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so make ready your soul that JESUS may find a resting place there.

I. Consider the question and the answer:

i. Where is the resting place? (*καταλύματα*.) It is the question of many a weary soul in this toilsome world; JESUS asks it, and so do we.

ii. The man answered by opening to them his own house, and showing a large upper room furnished, *i. e.*, prepared for the occasion.

iii. Our LORD's priests bring you the message, "*The Master saith.... I will keep the passover at thy house.*" (S. Matt., xxvi., 18.) Is it ready? Can we say, "*Come in, Thou Blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest Thou without? for I have prepared the house.*" (Gen., xxiv., 31.) Do we not often say this, and when our LORD enters He finds our hearts, as He found the Temple, a den of worldliness and sin.

II. Consider the Resting-place of our LORD in this world:

i. At His Birth, when He came to Bethlehem, He found no room in the resting place (*καταλύματι*).—S. Luke, ii., 7. But the true House of Bread is the Chamber of the Holy Eucharist.

ii. The mob without are seeking His life, hunting the weary wayfarer down; so now the world, by its sin, seeks the life of JESUS, and where can He find a resting place? in the heart that is prepared for Him, in the soul of the humble penitent.

iii. "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My Voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.*" (Rev., iii., 20.) Can you keep shut that door? Dare you open it without preparing the resting place?

III. Consider the Chamber of the Eucharist as the Christian's Resting place:

i. Outside all was dark; the darkness of nature, intensified by the darkness of sin, as they conspired against JESUS; into this darkness Judas went, "*He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night*" (S. John, xiii., 30); so do those who, having received the Holy Eucharist, return to a life of selfishness and sin.

ii. Within all was light; the brightness of the glory of His Kingdom; so it was of old, "*There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings*" (Exod., x., 22-23); so let us abide with our LORD in the resting place, which He has provided, until the night is past, and on the third day the coming of the Kingdom of the Resurrection disperses all darkness.

iii. The Jews of old washed their hands before eating; JESUS washes His disciples' feet before this feast, for they cross the threshold of heaven who eat of His Body. Let us pray Him to wash us, that we may enter, and eat, and abide with Him.

Affections.—Realize the weariness of sin; pray that you may find rest for your soul; resolve to seek it in the Holy Eucharist.

FRIDAY AFTER SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

"Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink."—S. John, iv., 6-8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD talking with the woman at the well.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may seek more diligently the water of life.

I. Consider some of the virtues manifested by our LORD :

i. His love of souls ; “ *Give me to drink* ” ; while this tells of the natural thirst of His weary body, it speaks to us still more of that supernatural thirst for the soul of that poor guilty woman, for whose sake He waited by the well, that He might impart to her the water of life.

ii. His patience ; wearied as He was with His long journey beneath the burning sun, how patient He is with this wayward woman ; He answers her questions, overcomes her prejudices, and finally wins her soul.

iii. His gentleness coupled with firmness ; infinite tenderness He exhibits, and yet that does not prevent Him from dealing with her with firmness, showing that He saw through her excuses, and knew her sinful life.

II. Consider some of the characteristics displayed by the woman :

i. Her insincerity ; she excuses herself from the performance of her duty to her neighbour, in giving a cup of cold water to a poor traveller, on the ground that He is a Jew ; when our LORD begins to speak of the sins of her life she tries to evade the subject by asking Him a controversial question as to the rival claims of Jerusalem and Samaria.

ii. Her selfishness ; she thinks only of herself, probably refusing the cup of water because there was no one there to see the kind action ; and only asking for the living water, spoken of by our LORD, that she might be saved from the labour of coming to the well.

ii. Her worldliness ; she is living a sinful life, and is very unwilling to give up the world. JESUS has to plead with her for her soul, and it is only when she has felt how thoroughly He knows her, that she yields to His efforts and is converted.

III. Consider the illustration our LORD uses :

i. In the previous chapter in dealing with Nicodemus our LORD had illustrated His teaching from one of the powers of nature, the wind, now He takes as the symbol of the divine life He longs to communicate, the element of water, the universal necessary to the life of the body, the emblem of the object of the soul's desires.

ii. In the promise “ *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst* ” (v. 14) there is at once a reference to the draughts of sinful pleasure with which she had vainly tried to satisfy the thirst of her soul, and to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which should satisfy every desire of her soul without satiating it.

iii. In answer to her request, “ *Give me this water* ”, our LORD lays His finger on the sins of her life ; for the first office of the Holy Spirit is to convince of sin—S. John, xvi., 8 ; the negative work of penitence must precede and prepare for that springing up of the water of life in the soul, which is to be God's great Gift.

iv. The result of her Conversion, and of this gift, is the desire and effort to bring others to receive the same blessings.

Affections.—Realize that nothing less than GOD can satisfy your soul ; pray for a docile spirit ; resolve to try to bring some one to CHRIST.

SATURDAY AFTER SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, 'Go and sit down to meat'? And will not rather say unto him, 'Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?' Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.'—S. Luke, xvii., 7-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the examination of your life and work, which will take place at the day of Judgment.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be found a faithful servant.

The servant here is a slave (*δοῦλον*), and this gives to the Parable its force.

I. Consider the aspect in which this Parable represents our relation to GOD:

i. The service of GOD is simply our duty; it is not a matter of favour on our part, but of necessity. "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." (I. Cor., ix., 16.)

ii. We can have no possible *claim* on GOD for our services, because we belong to GOD. Eternal life is the *GIFT* of GOD, *Whose we are*; eternal death is the *WAGES* of sin, *whose we are not*.—Rom., vi., 23.

iii. Hence when we have fulfilled all GOD's commands we have simply done our duty, we are unprofitable servants; how much more so, when a review of life and work shows GOD's commands wilfully broken, GOD's work shamefully neglected, and again and again self-will and self-interest the only principle recognized.

II. Consider some occasions for reflecting on this Parable:

i. When we have been really striving to work for GOD, and are tempted to pride and vainglory, here is the antidote, "I have only done my duty."

ii. When wearied with the struggle of life we are tempted to give up or evade certain irksome labours, here is the check, "It is my duty, it must be done."

iii. When having accomplished some little work we are tempted to think that now we may take our ease, and rest awhile, the example of the servant, who returning from labour in the field at once begins to work in the house, tells us that in this life each task completed is but the stepping-stone to another, that we must not think of rest till "*the night cometh, when no man can work.*" (S. John, ix., 4.)

III. Consider further:

i. That this represents the relation which in the strictness of justice exists between us and GOD; for this is the way we treat our servants; and on this, as the true medicine for pride, we should often dwell.

ii. That very different is the way in which, according to the riches of His Grace, our LORD will treat His faithful servants; for "*Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them*" (S. Luke, xii., 37), as He did to His Apostles.—S. John, xiii., 4-5.

iii. That this Parable calls us therefore to humility, when we reflect how little GOD owes us, to love and gratitude, when we consider how much He gives us.

Affections.—Realize how much you have left undone that you ought to have done, and make an act of Contrition; pray for the grace of humility; resolve to be more diligent in some neglected duty.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ: that in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift: waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."—I. Cor. i, 4-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul gladly writing these words, knowing how much of blame must follow.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the virtue of hope.

This is the saddest in its tone of all the Epistles of S. Paul, its object almost entirely to rebuke grave sins amongst the Corinthians; and yet he begins with these words of thanksgiving.

I. Consider the sins with which the Corinthian Church was infected:

i. Pride, manifesting itself in vain boasting both of intellectual and spiritual gifts, especially in the gift of tongues; also in eating meats offered to idols through vain conceit of superior knowledge.

ii. Schism, irregularity, and even sacrilege in religious worship; seen in factions under party-leaders; unseemly attire of women in Church, and sacrilege in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

iii. Impurity of the grossest kind.

II. Consider the grounds for encouragement, the bright side in the spiritual state of the Corinthians:

i. The grace given; so that they come behind others in no gift (the gifts (*χαρίσματα*) in us are the results of the Grace (*χάρις*) in Gov). To help them in their struggle, they had all the gifts that God could give them.

ii. *"Enriched....in all utterance and in all knowledge."* *λόγος* was the objective truth preached, *γνῶσις* was the truth subjectively apprehended; they had able preachers, they were intelligent hearers.

iii. *"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"*; this was the greatest proof of the perfection of spiritual life, and of the exercise of faith, hope, and love.

III. Consider some of the lessons here:

i. We learn that in the presence of discouragements from temptation, and even actual sin, we should begin by remembering with gratitude the bright side, the grounds of hope, the gifts and means of grace which we have.

ii. We learn that the contrast between the sins which defile our life, and the graces which sanctify it, should be an appeal to our better selves, an encouragement to make a greater effort to conquer sin.

iii. We are warned that great spiritual gifts do not exempt us from great spiritual dangers; Judas could work miracles.

Affections.—Gratitude for all the gifts of grace; pray that you may use them all to God's glory; resolve to watch against the sin which most hinders your spiritual growth.

MONDAY AFTER EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LAW OF LOVE.

"Then one of them, which was a Lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—S. Matt., xxii., 35-40

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD answering the lawyer's question.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the gift of charity.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom., xiii., 10), *"Sin is the transgression of the law"* (I. S. John, iii., 4); hence love and sin are opposites, and love is the principle of sanctity; for sanctity is union with God, for *"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."* (I. S. John, iv., 16.) Love, then, is the principle of life, and the two great laws, which our LORD quotes, are simply the manifestations of the principle of love in the two relationships of life; our life towards God, and our life towards man.

I. Consider our duty to love God :

i. *"With all thy mind"*; the mind is put for the intellect (*αγαπᾶν* signifies a reasoning love, from seeing in the person that which is worthy of regard, or from a sense of duty, as to a benefactor); we are to *know* God.

ii. *"With all thy heart"*; the seat of the affections; we are to desire God.

iii. *"With all thy soul"*; the animating principle, is put for the external life, by which the interior love of mind and heart finds expression in acts of loving service. The principle of love must guide the whole nature to God as its object.

II. Consider our duty to love our neighbour :

i. It is a necessary result from love being the principle and law of life. Love of God can no more co-exist with hatred of our neighbour than light and darkness, or cold and heat can dwell together; hence *"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."* (I. S. John iv., 20.)

ii. Besides, if we love God we must love all whom God loves, and our neighbours, like ourselves, are God's children.

iii. This principle of love must find expression in our actions towards our neighbour; *"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."* (I. S. John, iii., 18.)

III. Consider our duty to love ourselves :

i. We are to love ourselves because GOD loves us.

ii. We are to measure our love to ourselves by our love to our neighbour, *"love thy neighbour as thyself."* Justice requires this, that we should recognize our own and our neighbour's rights as equal, in that both are objects of GOD's love.

iii. This proper love of self should be manifested in the earnest effort to *"work out your own salvation."* (Phil. ii., 12.)

Affections.—Realize the true position of love as the ruling principle of life; pray for more love of God; resolve to do some act of love to your neighbour.

TUESDAY AFTER EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

"Now in the morning as He returned into the city, He hungered. And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away."—S. Matt., xxi., 18-19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD cursing the fig tree.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from hypocrisy.

I. Consider the Miracle :

i. A fig tree (*συκῆν πιάρν*), *lit.*, one fig tree, *i. e.*, a solitary tree standing alone in its pretensions ; on this emphasis depends much of the force of the teaching of the miracle.

ii. It had leaves, which at that season were as untimely as fruit would have been ; by its ostentatious precocity it invited the passer-by to search for fruit.

iii. S. Mark (xi., 13) tells us "*the time of figs was not yet*" ; its guilt was not that it was barren, but that it was false ; a hypocrite pretending more than the surrounding trees, pretending what it could not then have.

II. Consider the miracle in its application to the Jews :

i. The Jew stood alone, and while the rest of the world acknowledged its barrenness, he boasted of his solitary fruitfulness.

ii. By their minute observances of the law the Jews showed their leaves, invited the world to behold their fruit, as the chosen people of God.

iii. "*The time of figs was not yet*" ; before the Incarnation man could do nothing, and his true fruit was to have presented himself before God, acknowledging his barrenness ; this the Gentiles did, they owned they were sinners ; the Jews in denying it were hypocrites as well ; their guilt, like that of the fig tree, did not lie in their barrenness, but in their ostentatious hypocrisy.

III. Consider the miracle in its application to individuals now :

i. It is a warning to all that our LORD *hungers* for fruit, not pretension ; how we need to search our hearts to acknowledge our barrenness.

ii. It had the power given it to bring forth leaves, it spent all its sap and strength in an ostentatious display of foliage ; how much danger there is in our spending our strength in cultivating the mere externals of religion, instead of the real interior fruits of humility, charity, &c.

iii. Our LORD's miracles of mercy were all exercised on men ; His one miracle of severity and judgment is done upon a tree. Trees were made for men, and have no volition, so cannot sin ; and by the withering of this barren fig tree our LORD causes it to bear fruit for ever in the garden of Holy Scripture, as a warning to man, thus by its death living on and fulfilling a glorious end.

Affections.—Realize the severity of our LORD's judgment ; pray for the grace of thorough sincerity ; resolve to offer our LORD some fruit in your life to day.

WEDNESDAY AFTER EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE POUNDS.

"A certaiu nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."—S. Luke, xix., 12-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the coming of our LORD in glory to judge all men.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be found among His faithful servants in that day.

This parable is not to be regarded as identical with that of the Talents, from which it differs in time, place, details, and scope.

I. Consider the objects of this parable :

i. To correct the mistake, and repress the impatience of those who thought that the kingdom of GOD should immediately appear (v. 11).

ii. To teach the necessity of earnest diligence in setting forward the interests of that kingdom during the period of waiting.

iii. To warn against the danger of being drawn into the ranks of His enemies, when His personal presence should be withdrawn from them, by setting forth the awful punishment of these on His return.

II. Consider the departure of the nobleman :

i. He was of noble birth, and was to receive the sovereignty over his fellow countrymen, and then to return to reign over them ; so our LORD has gone to receive solemn investiture of that earthly kingdom, which He has purchased with His Blood, and which He shall hereafter return to claim as His own, sitting on the throne of His Father David.

ii. As in the parable of the Talents, He distributes to His servants His goods ; the sum entrusted to each is much smaller in this parable, perhaps because that other parable was spoken primarily to the Apostles, who received the greatest gifts from CHRIST, this to disciples generally, whose gifts were comparatively smaller.

iii. His fellow-citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, "*We will not have this man to reign over us*" ; so after the Ascension, in the stoning of S. Stephen, and in every persecution, and outrage against His religion, have our LORD's rebellious citizens sent after Him messages of hatred and defiance.

III. Consider the three classes with whom our LORD deals on His return :

i. His faithful servants, who are rewarded according to their fidelity, and in being placed over His Cities are called to reign with Him.—II. Tim., ii., 12.

ii. The slothful servant ; the napkin (*σουδάριον*), in which the servant has wrapped the pound, witnesses that, since he had never needed it, he had not fulfilled the law, "*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*" (Gen., iii., 19.) The gift, which to him has proved useless, is given to the one who has shown himself most able to use it ; the exclamation of those who stood by, the angels, "*Lord, he hath ten pounds,*" seems to have been a remonstrance ; by disregarding it our LORD emphasizes that law of His kingdom, that in the world to come the rich grow richer, and the poor poorer—for there is a capacity in the soul of infinite development towards good or evil, which will be part of its reward, or punishment in eternity.

iii. His open enemies, those who would not have Him to reign over them, are destroyed ; so when the day of grace has passed, the day of judgment without mercy will begin, and then all evil will be subdued forever.

Affections.—Realize the certainty of GOD's justice ; pray that you may not deceive yourself as to which class you belong ; resolve to prove yourself a faithful servant by your diligence in forwarding the interests of CHRIST'S kingdom.

THURSDAY AFTER EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

JESUS OUR BROTHER.

"For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."—Heb., ii., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the meeting of Joseph with his penitent brothers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so repent of your sins that you may not fear to accept the gracious invitation of JESUS in the Holy Eucharist, *"Come near to Me, I pray you."* (Gen., xlv., 4.)

I. Consider who our Brother is:

- i. He is GOD of Heaven and earth, and yet not ashamed to call us brethren.
- ii. By the Incarnation He entered the human family, and became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.—Eph., v., 30.

iii. In the Holy Eucharist He comes amongst His brethren to bestow upon them all the riches of His grace.

II. Consider how we have treated our Brother:

i. As Jacob was treated by Esau; we have driven Him forth from His home in our hearts, driven Him forth as an exile, by our want of love.

ii. As Joseph was treated by his brethren; we have sold Him, when we have preferred our own interest in this world to Him, sold Him often for even less than twenty pieces of silver, for some trifling self-indulgence.

iii. As Abel was treated by Cain; when we have yielded to mortal sin we have, as far as we were able, killed our Brother, we have crucified unto ourselves the Son of GOD afresh.—Heb., vi., 6.

III. Consider how our Brother treats us in the Holy Eucharist:

i. He recalls us from exile and labour, and offers us a resting place in Him; He says, *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (S. Matt., xi., 28.)

ii. He saves our lives in this famine-stricken world by feeding us with the Bread of Heaven, the Corn of the Mighty, His own Body.

iii. He comes to save us from the fate of Cain, from the fratricide's punishment, to assure us of forgiveness, to entrust Himself once more to our keeping.—Gen., iv., 9.

Affections.—Realize how cruelly you have treated our LORD by your sins; pray Him to pardon all past neglect and injury; resolve to be your Brother's keeper, to keep Him tenderly and faithfully in your own soul.

FRIDAY AFTER EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ZACCHÆUS.

"And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way."—S. Luke, xix., 2-5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Zacchæus climbing the sycamore tree.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may use every means to reach CHRIST.

We have here a rich man with a childlike heart, drawn by curiosity to seek our LORD, and drawn by our LORD'S Words to leave all and follow Him. In the readiness with which he yields himself to CHRIST he is the great contrast to the Woman of Samaria.

I. Consider his desires and his difficulties :

i. *"He sought to see Jesus"*; partly from curiosity, having heard the fame of His miracles; partly from the workings of preventing grace in his heart, as shown by his ready reception of our LORD.

ii. His first difficulty was the crowd; this he overcame by running before the multitude, and so detaching himself from them. What is the crowd which is hindering you? the claims of society; for he was chief among the publicans? or the cares, riches, and pleasures of the world; for he was rich? We must learn from him to detach ourselves from these things, and to rise above them.

iii. His other difficulty was in himself; *"he was little of stature"*; this he obviates by climbing a tree; the smallness of our spiritual growth often hinders us from seeing CHRIST, but there are trees by the way which we can climb, the Sacraments of grace, or our Crosses.

II. Consider our LORD's words to Zacchæus :

i. *"When Jesus came to the place"*; if we approach the Sacraments JESUS will come to us there; if we mount the Cross JESUS will find us there.

ii. *"Zacchæus, make haste, and come down"* (v. 5); *"He calleth His own sheep by name."* (S. John, x., 3.)

iii. *"For to-day I must abide at thy house"*; Zacchæus desired to see Him, and JESUS offers to abide with him; so if we seek Him, He gives more than either we desire or deserve.

III. Consider what took place in the house :

i. The people murmured; as well might they find fault with a physician because he enters the house of a sick man; so now the self-righteous world often murmurs when a penitent sinner invites our LORD into the house of his heart in the Holy Eucharist.

ii. Zacchæus confessed his sins openly, and made satisfaction; he confessed that common sin of his class, fraud; and set apart half his goods to restore fourfold what he had defrauded, the remainder he gives to the poor.

iii. CHRIST absolves the penitent; and the rich man enters the kingdom of GOD, the camel disengaged of his hunch passes through the needle's eye—S. Luke, xviii., 25; *"that which was lost"* (v. 10) shows what had been his condition; CHRIST had sought him, and found him, where He Himself would be sought and found,—on the Tree.

Affections.—Realize our LORD'S love for your soul; pray for the grace of true penitence; resolve to make some act of reparation for past sins.

SATURDAY AFTER EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HEALING OF MALCHUS' EAR.

"And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him."—S. Luke, xxii., 50-51.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD healing the servant's ear.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for that moral courage which may enable you to confess CHRIST before men.

I. Consider the different accounts of this incident:

i. While all the Evangelists record the act of S. Peter, S. Luke alone tells us that our Blessed LORD healed the man's ear; as a Physician this, the only cure by our LORD of a wound inflicted by violence, would have a special interest for him.

ii. S. John alone tells us that "*the servant's name was Malchus*" (S. John, xviii., 10); this is consistent with what we know of S. John's acquaintance with the High Priest and his household; for it is he who tells us that one who provoked S. Peter to deny CHRIST was "*his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off*" (v. 26).

iii. Thus we learn the advantage of having four Evangelists, and see how the individuality of each writer appears in the special details recorded by him.

II. Consider our LORD's dealings with S. Peter:

i. The blow which S. Peter, regardless of the odds against him, inflicted, was a mark of his love for our LORD, and of his natural courage.

ii. But it showed a forgetfulness of our LORD's teaching, and was exactly the spirit of S. Matt., xvi., 22, which had been so severely rebuked. The words, "*Put up again thy sword*" (S. Matt., xxvi., 52), tell us that the battles of His Kingdom are not to be fought with the temporal sword.

iii. This outburst was followed by desertion and denial; showing how little natural courage is to be relied on where moral courage is wanting! How much more the latter is worth than the former! The one so much a matter of temperament, the other of high principle, strengthened by grace.

III. Consider our LORD's dealings with Malchus:

i. The servant was in arms against our LORD's life, yet He healed him. What gracious benignity! So with the injuries that we receive through our sins, we have to come to Him for healing.

ii. He was healed with a touch; did it touch his heart, or did he go on as before among the foes of JESUS? How many receive goodness and mercy from GOD, and yet continue with His enemies.

iii. The whole miracle is a practical commentary on our LORD's precept, "*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*" (S. Matt., v., 44.)

Affections.—Realize our LORD's goodness to you in your life; pray for a spirit of gratitude; resolve to make some special act of thanksgiving.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS.

"And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee....Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."—S. Matt., ix. 2-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the man lying helpless on his bed.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so realize the needs of your soul, and use all the means of grace, that your sins may be forgiven.

I. Consider the disease; Palsy or Paralysis:

i. It was painless; the part affected generally lost all sense of feeling, was, as far as usefulness was concerned, dead; and so with the spiritual disease it represents, the paralysis of the soul, it is a living death! the very fact of its being painless making it so much more difficult to arouse the sinner to a sense of his danger.

ii. It rendered the man helpless; he could do nothing for himself, but must depend on the good offices of others; so with the soul in this state, it must depend much on the prayers and exhortations of others (especially of the Church) to bring it to CHRIST.

iii. It was hopeless; beyond the power of man's skill, nothing to look forward to but death; so with the spiritually paralyzed, it requires a miracle of grace to restore the expiring flame of life.

II. Consider the man's approach to CHRIST:

i. In this particular case there evidently existed a strong conviction of the close connexion between his sin and his sickness; in other instances the forgiveness of sin follows the bodily healing, in this it precedes it.

ii. Feeling his helplessness, he seeks the aid of four others, who bear him into our LORD's presence; the number four signifies the work of the Church in the world (*e. g.*, the four rivers of Eden, the four Evangelists, &c.); so this typifies the helpless sinner, being, by the work of the Church, brought to CHRIST in the Ministry of Reconciliation.

iii. *"Jesus seeing THEIR faith"*; *i. e.*, the faith of the man, as well as the faith of those who bore him, a faith which triumphed over all obstacles. Faith brought him to the house where CHRIST was, and faith caused them to overcome the hindrance of the crowd by letting him down through the roof, and laying him at our LORD's Feet.

III. Consider the gifts of our LORD:

i. Absolution; *"Thy sins be forgiven thee."*

ii. Penance; *"Take up thy bed"*; a burden to be carried; a Cross, the remembrance of former sin, or perhaps the effects of it; *"My sin is ever before me."* (Ps., li., 3.)

iii. Counsel; *"Go unto thine house"*; that *"house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"* (II. Cor., v., 1); journey home carrying thy Cross: or we may take it otherwise, go back to thy ordinary duties in the state of life in which GOD has placed you; so commonplace! and yet it was what our LORD did at Nazareth.

Affections.—Realize the danger of not feeling our sins; pray for a conviction of sin; resolve to bear patiently and cheerfully the crosses which past sins have entailed on you.

MONDAY AFTER NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

JESUS AND THE SCRIBES.

"And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, Which had given such power unto men."—S. Matt., ix., 3-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Scribes, filled with malice and unbelief, listening to the words of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from envy, and unbelief.

I. Consider our LORD dealing with the Scribes:

i. He claims the power of Absolution, a divine power, and He proceeds to exercise this power.

ii. The Scribes accuse Him of blasphemy for arrogating to Himself divine power.

iii. He proves His claim, first by revealing to them the thoughts of their hearts, then by claiming the further power of healing the man's paralysis, effecting a change in him which they can see; and He makes these two the evidence of the possession of the power to forgive sins, the effects of which they cannot see.

II. Consider the Church's similar dealings with the world now:

i. *"God hath given power, and commandment, to His ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins."* (Morning Prayer.) *"By His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."* (Visitation of the Sick.) The power of the Keys is the claim of the Church to dispense to the penitent GOD's gift of pardon.

ii. The world accuses the Church of blasphemy; although this claim is not greater than that of other Sacramental powers, it is the one which arouses most opposition, and naturally so; for it is the overthrow of Satan's kingdom in the soul, the breaking the devil's chains, and setting his captive free.

iii. The Church proves her claim—in part by the Words of her LORD on the first Easter Day—S. John, xx., 23—in part by the testimony of those absolved, the evidence of their altered lives, of their new strength.

III. Consider further:

i. *"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins"*; on earth, *i. e.*, in His Church; the divine power flowing from the Head, through His priests, by virtue of the union of His Divine and Human Nature; for all Sacraments are Extensions of the Incarnation; and this was one of the purposes for which He came, to take away the sins of the world.

ii. The two acts of divine power, which the Scribes by their unbelief brought out, require the confirmation of each other. He Who forgives sins ought to know the thoughts of the heart; hence, in the Church, Confession ever precedes Absolution.

iii. *"The multitude.....glorified God, Which had given such power unto men."* They knew not then the full truth of their words; but so do that multitude before the throne glorify God, who, through the exercise of that same power, have *"washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."* (Rev., vii., 14.)

Affections.—Realize the greatness of our LORD's gift to His Church in the power of Absolution; pray that you may always seek it with right dispositions of heart; resolve by some act to seek to glorify GOD for His goodness and mercy to you.

TUESDAY AFTER NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

BRINGING SOULS TO CHRIST.

"And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."—S. Matt., ix., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the exertions of the four friends in bringing the sick man to CHRIST.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have more love for souls.

In all the accounts of this miracle the faith and zeal of those, who brought the sick of the palsy to our LORD, are brought prominently forward. S. Mark telling us their number, four; while both he and S. Luke inform us of a difficulty they had to meet, and of the way in which they overcame it.

I. Consider the duty of helping one another, as taught by the example of those who brought the paralyzed man to CHRIST:

i. Without help this man could not have reached our LORD at all; how many like him are now waiting to be brought to CHRIST by others.

ii. How much we may do to help one another! as we look back on our own spiritual life how many of its blessings we owe to our fellow-men! to pious parents, good friends, faithful priests.

iii. How often we wish there were something we could do for GOD when we are neglecting the daily opportunities of helping other souls to Him by teaching, example, or prayer.

II. Consider some classes of souls who claim our intercessions by their very helplessness:

i. Sick men; so overwhelmed by disease or weakness, that they cannot pray, as is sometimes the case in paralysis.

ii. Infants; whom we may bring helpless before CHRIST to be baptized, and for whom we should pray, especially while they cannot pray for themselves.

iii. Those whose affections and will have become paralyzed by long neglect, and so cannot pray.

iv. Those who by habits of sin have almost destroyed the desire for better things.

v. The heathen who know not CHRIST.

III. Consider some other ways of helping souls:

i. By telling sinners where CHRIST is to be found—in the House teaching and healing all who come to Him; *i. e.*, in the House of His Church, speaking to them of your own experience of His good gifts.

ii. By helping to bring them to Him in the Church; trying to overcome the obstacles of timidity and cowardice, bringing them as in this case, through the crowd into individual relation with CHRIST's priest.

iii. By bestowing some labour and thought, as well as prayer, on the special difficulties of individuals.

Affections.—Realize the privilege of helping others; pray for more zeal; resolve to pray for some one person for a certain time.

WEDNESDAY AFTER NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE END OF MAN.

"Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."—Eccles., xii., 13.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John Baptist throughout his life living simply for GOD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to realize, and to fulfil the end of your being.

The question of all questions is, why was I made? what is the purpose of my creation? what should be the aim of my life? S. Ignatius answers that man was created to praise, honour, and serve GOD, and so to save his soul.

I. Consider how we are to praise GOD:

i. All creation praises GOD by the fulfilment of His purpose, by obedience to His laws; and man, as the crown of creation, is called to lead this chorus of praise.

ii. Man is called to join in a fellowship of praise; creation is like some glorious cathedral built for the offering of the Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, for a grand High Mass; the lower order of creation represent the orchestra, man has the vocal part, and all together should the praises rise to the throne; alas! how often man's part alone is a discord.

II. Consider how we are to honour GOD:

i. By choosing Him always, and in preference to all else.

ii. We must not only choose GOD in preference to evil, but we must set aside for Him many a form of goodness; the world is constituted as it is, a mixture of good and evil, that we may be able to honour GOD by setting aside many lawful claims for Him.

III. Consider how we are to serve GOD:

i. With an intelligent service; GOD has given us free-will that we may choose, and intelligence that we may make a rational choice; that we may serve Him, not merely as machines, but as moral agents.

ii. With a loving service; GOD has given us a heart to love Him, that our service may be a joyful service, because an act of love.

IV. Consider how we are to save our soul:

i. Negatively; by resisting sin, or, when we have yielded, putting it away by penitence.

ii. Positively; by cultivating all virtues, and developing the faculties of the soul; man is never to stand still; "*Go up higher*" (S. Luke, xiv., 10), is the law of his life.

V. Consider where we can find an example of the fulfilment of these obligations. In the life of S. John Baptist, perhaps more than in any mere human life, we see one who praised, honoured, and served GOD, and so worked out his salvation. The world would write on the gates of Machærus as his epitaph, "He has failed;" we may write, He realized the end of his being, he lived for GOD.

Affections.—Realize that you were created for GOD; pray that you may live for GOD; resolve to seek some means to-day of praising and honouring Him.

THURSDAY AFTER NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ELEMENT OF BREAD.

"Give us this day our daily bread."—S. Matt., vi., 11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a field of wheat waving in the breeze.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so pass through the disciplines of this life that you may be made the Bread of CHRIST.

The Element of Bread was chosen by our LORD as the outward sign of the Holy Eucharist, and it is full of significance in the lessons it teaches.

I. Consider Bread as a type of CHRIST; *"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"* (S. John, xii., 24):

i. In the Parable of the Sower our LORD says, *"The seed is the Word of God."* (S. Luke, viii., 11.) S. John says, *"The Word was God"* (S. John, i., 1), and in the first prophecy the Word is called *"The Seed of the Woman."*—Gen., iii., 15. At the Incarnation the Good Seed, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, was first sown in human nature.

ii. In the Passion and Death of CHRIST, we see the Corn of Wheat dying and falling into the ground of the tomb.

iii. In the Holy Eucharist we see *"the much fruit,"* the Bread of Life.

II. Consider Bread as a type of God's Elect:

i. The waving grain in the field; representing the good and bad in the world, more or less moved by every breath of the world's opinion.

ii. The good grain separated from the chaff by threshing; reminding us how by the action of temptation the good and bad are manifested and separated.

iii. The good grain then ground into flour; signifying the result of trials and crosses on God's faithful children.

III. Consider Bread as the type of CHRIST'S Mystical Body, the Church:

i. The flour is composed of grains, which come from different stalks, may be from different fields, perhaps from different parts of the land, watered by different clouds, fed by different soils, reaped by different hands, but now all ONE; so *"We being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that One Bread."* (I. Cor., x., 17.)

ii. But the flour alone has no coherence, it falls apart until it is kneaded with water; the flour alone represents our unregenerate nature, the water Baptism, by which we become members of the Body of CHRIST.

iii. The dough, after it is kneaded, has to be exposed to the action of fire, and so baked; here we have the fiery influences of the HOLY GHOST in perfecting the Mystical Body of CHRIST.

IV. Consider Bread as typifying the benefits of the Holy Eucharist:

i. It strengthens us, and is the most nutritious sort of food; so the effect of our Communions is to strengthen our spiritual nature, and of all the means of grace it stands first in this.

ii. It satisfies without ever causing loathing, as so many other kinds of food do; so the Blessed Sacrament satisfies the faithful soul, which never grows weary of it.

iii. It preserves life, is called *"the staff of life"*; our LORD says of the Holy Eucharist, *"If any man eat of This Bread, he shall live for ever."* (S. John, vi., 51.)

Affections.—Realize the oneness of the Body of CHRIST; pray that you may never mar this unity by want of charity; resolve to accept cheerfully your especial Cross.

FRIDAY AFTER NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE END OF CREATURES.

"The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament showeth His handy-work."—Ps., xix., 1.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John Baptist clad in his rough garments, and partaking of the simple food of the desert.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of detachment from creatures.

Around me in this world I see various objects of beauty and utility, why were they created? what is their end? S. Ignatius answers, "All have been created for man, to assist him in the pursuit of the end for which he was created."

I. Consider the End of Creatures :

i. To supply man's lawful needs, and to minister to his happiness, and so to lead him to glorify GOD; in their over-use they become the means of his temptation, the objects of his idolatry.

ii. To be the instruments of sacrifice; they are given to man that he may have something to surrender to GOD, as the expression of his love; so their truest use is often their non-use.

iii. To lead man to know, to love, and to serve GOD; the forces and phenomena of the universe speak of GOD's wisdom and power, the miracles of Divine Providence speak of His love, all obediently doing His Will teach us to serve Him.

II. Consider some of the lessons the Creatures we use teach us :

i. Dependence; without them we could not live; for the gift of life needs a further gift of food to sustain it, and this teaches me my dependence on GOD.

ii. Gratitude; a gift implies a Giver, and necessitates some return; we can make no return but thanksgiving; do we neglect even this?

iii. Fear; my corrupt nature and my enemy Satan are ever trying to pervert the Creatures from their true end, to lead me to abuse them; I am but a steward, and how strict is the account I must give of my stewardship of the Creatures!

III. Consider where we can find, as an example, a man who realized this :

i. S. John Baptist; amid the solitudes of the wilderness the Creatures around only spoke to him of GOD. He used those necessary for his sustenance, but how powerless they were to hurt him; power, popularity, praise, the luxuries of Herod's Court he used all for GOD's glory; in him they fulfilled their end.

ii. Archimedes said, "Give me a place on which to stand outside the world, and I will move the world." S. John Baptist proved this. Detached from the Creatures, standing outside the world, by his moral force he swayed the multitudes at will, till his work was done, and One Mightier than he came.

iii. There is in the heart of man a passion of having; before the Fall it was satisfied by GOD, since the Fall man has tried too often to gratify it with Creatures; S. John put aside the Creatures, and possessed GOD.

Affections.—Realize the danger of loving too well this world; pray that the Creatures may lead you to GOD; resolve to examine whether any idol has possession of your heart.

SATURDAY AFTER NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

VOCATION.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."—II. S. Pet., i., 19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Voice of God amid the wilds of Judea, like that Voice amid the trees of Eden, revealing to S. John Baptist his Vocation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligent obedience to God's call.

I. Consider some laws of Vocation:

i. We are living stones of the City of God, our place there has been marked out from all eternity by God's predestination; here we are being prepared for that place through our Vocation.—I. S. Pet., ii., 5.

ii. As in Solomon's Temple, the stones were squared in the quarries, and all was prepared *"before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house"* (I. Kings, vi., 7); so of the New Jerusalem, this world is the mason's yard, where, by the discipline of life, we are being made ready for our places in heaven.

iii. This place depends on our fidelity to our Vocation, but if we lose our Vocation we have no reason to suppose that something else will do, or that another place will be given us; *e. g.*, Judas.

II. Consider some examples of Vocation in Holy Scripture:

i. None are too young to have a work for God in this world, though they may be too young to know it; *e. g.*, Jeremiah, S. John Baptist.

ii. None are too far off from God to be called; *e. g.*, the Magi.

iii. None are too high or too low; kings and shepherds were called to our LORD'S Cradle.

III. Consider further that:

i. Vocation is often revealed in work; we are not to sit idle till it comes. It was while the Magi were studying the stars, while the apostles were engaged in fishing, that they were called.

ii. Vocation does not smooth the difficulties of life; the wise men had a toilsome journey and lost the star, and had to seek guidance before they reached Bethlehem.

iii. We must seek the light of the HOLY GHOST that we may know our Vocation; His help, if we know it, that we may walk worthy of it.

IV. Consider S. John Baptist as the great example of one who realized that he had a Vocation from God, and, forgetful of all else, lived simply to fulfil it; who was so absorbed in the realization of his Vocation that when asked who he was, he said, *"I am the Voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord."* (S. John, i., 23.)

Affections.—Realize that the Voice of God must be the Guide of your life; pray that you may fulfil God's purpose for you; resolve to accept all life's trials as a means to this end.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

REDEEMING THE TIME.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."—Eph., v., 15-16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a merchant watching the fluctuations of the market, and seizing the opportunity to buy when it is at its lowest ebb.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may redeem the time, because the days are evil.

I. Consider the assertion of S. Paul, "*the days are evil*" :

i. It was not true only of S. Paul's time ; no, it was so before, in the days of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, &c. ; after, in the first three centuries of persecution, and glorious martyrdom.

ii. It ceased to be true in this sense in those pages of the Church's glory, as historians call them, but rather of the Church's shame, when Satan gave the world into the power of the Church : *e. g.*, the times of Constantine, or Hildebrand, when Christendom became but another name for the world ; or in the last century, when there was no opposition, no persecution, because no life. So we learn from the past that when the Church is doing her duty the days are evil, and that when they are not evil it is because Satan is working through the Church.

iii. The days are evil now ; the various forces which go to make up the world are arrayed in antagonism to the Church : Society impregnated with infidelity, or indifference ; science tending to materialism ; theology tinged with rationalism ; politics, liberty for all but the Church. Let us realize it, and thank God, for it is a sign that the Church is doing her work.

II. Consider what S. Paul tells us we must therefore do :

i. *Redeem the time* : (*εξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν*) like merchants taking advantage of the evil times, knowing that they will pass away, and buying up for yourselves the opportunity. Observe the middle voice here, "*for yourselves*"—*i. e.*, each individually.

ii. The time : (*τὸν καιρὸν*) *lit.*, the season, occasion, opportunity.

iii. To do this we are to take heed how strictly we walk.

III. Consider the importance of this advice in the present day :

i. We say sometimes we can do nothing, because the days are evil ; it is no use trying, because everything is against us. S. Paul tells us that this is exactly the reason why we are to do our very best, that, at least *for ourselves*, we may seize the opportunity.

ii. The duty of each individual is to use every means of grace—Prayer, Sacraments, &c.

iii. We are to place ourselves as much as possible beyond the reach of the evil around us, letting it act as a continual spur, urging us towards that world where no evil can come, making us walk circumspectly indeed.

Affections.—Thanksgiving that our lot is cast in evil days, when God's Church is trying to do her work ; pray that God may teach you how best to improve the occasion ; resolve carefully to examine whether you are neglecting any means of grace.

MONDAY AFTER TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

"There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country."—S. Matt., xxii., 33.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the crucifixion of our Blessed LORD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never, wilfully by your sins, crucify CHRIST.

This parable is an explication of Isaiah, v., 1-8.

I. Consider its historical application:

i. The Householder is God; the Vineyard, the Jewish Church which He had selected out of all His World; the Hedge, the Law given from Sinai; the Tower, the Temple where God set His Name; the Winepress, the Altars of the Temple, where the sacrifices which told of Redemption were offered daily; the Husbandmen, the Priests, Levites, and people generally.

ii. The going into a far country; God's withdrawal from the more direct manifestation to His people, and His long suffering in waiting for His people's repentance.

iii. The servants who were maltreated (vv. 34-37), the prophets, ending with S. John Baptist.

II. Consider its prophetic application:

i. The treatment of the Son (vv. 37-40); sent at the Incarnation to His people, they conspire against Him (like Joseph), saying, "*This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him*" (v. 38).

ii. The casting Him out of the vineyard, before they slew Him (v. 39), foretells His delivery to the heathen Governor Pontius Pilate, and His crucifixion.

iii. Their own destruction by the Roman armies (vv. 41-46); the stone falling upon them and grinding them to powder, and the gift of the vineyard to the Gentile Church.

III. Consider its individual application:

i. Your soul is God's Vineyard, for which He has done everything; fenced it with the walls of grace; built a tower, your conscience; given it a winepress, your Cross; let it out to a husbandman, yourself (like Adam); the work, "*to dress it and to keep it.*" (Gen., ii., 15.)

ii. The warning of His Priests; and lastly, His own visit in the Holy Eucharist. Do you heed those warnings, "*Bring forth....fruits worthy of repentance?*" (S. Luke, iii., 8.) Do you reject Him, and after having received Him, perhaps by your sins crucify Him afresh (Heb., vi., 6)? then the gift of the vineyard to another will be the forfeiture of your throne.

iii. Let us so fall upon that stone, our LORD JESUS CHRIST (v. 44), that we may be broken by contrition, for "*a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise*" (Ps., li., 17), lest in the Day of Judgment it should fall on us and grind us to powder.

Affections.—Realize that God expects you to bear fruit; pray that our LORD may "*see of the travail of His Soul (in you) and....be satisfied*" (Isaiah, liii., 11); resolve to do some good work to-day, which you can offer to God, as fruit from His Vineyard, your soul.

TUESDAY AFTER TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a marriage for his son,"—S. Matt. xxii., 2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the servants setting out on their Mission.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may listen to, and obey, God's calls.

In the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen which precedes this, God appears demanding something from men, here as giving something to them; there He is displeased that His demands are not complied with, here that His goodness is not accepted.

I. Consider the Call:

i. The marriage festival in the Scripture is a favorite image of Communion with GOD;—the marriage itself will not be celebrated till the end, but the espousals are now; and the distinction in the East between these two brings out very strikingly the first and second Advent of our LORD; He came in great humility to espouse His Church, He shall come in glorious majesty to claim His bride.

ii. The first band of servants (S. John Baptist, the Twelve on their first mission, and the Seventy) find a general averseness, nothing worse; there was no active display of enmity against the Apostles before the Resurrection, simply "*they would not come*" (v. 3).

iii. The second band of servants represent the Apostles after Pentecost; "*My oxen and fatlings are killed*" (v. 4), a reference to the Crucifixion, the Victim has been slain, but there is a gracious overlooking of the past, "*I wot that through ignorance ye did it*" (Acts, iii., 17). There was a difference between the preaching before and after the Resurrection;—no longer a kingdom at hand, but already come; "*Jesus, and the Resurrection*" (Acts, xvii., 18); no longer an aversion only, but rejection, and persecution.

II. Consider the three classes who refuse to come:

i. These classes fall into two divisions; the first two guests corresponding with the same classes in the Parable of the Great Supper—(S. Luke, xiv., 18, 19), the remnant standing out in contrast to these, and representing the citizens in the Parable of the Pounds—(S. Luke, xix., 14), who not only reject, but hate the Gospel of CHRIST.

ii. "*One to his farm* (i. e., his estate, *τὸν ἀποιον ἀγρὸν*), *another to his merchandise* (v. 5); the landed proprietor and the merchant, the rich and those that would be rich; the temptations of *having* and *getting* choking the soul, and rendering it incapable of hearing and heeding God's call.

iii. The oppositions to truth may be classed as natural and diabolical. The first do not so much hate religion as love the world better; this is simply natural opposition; but there are those, represented by the remnant, in whom it arouses fierce opposition, and persecution; this is not natural, but devilish.

III. Consider the result of the refusal to come:

i. "*The King was wroth*" (v. 7). The injury to his servants he takes as to himself; so our LORD, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*" (Acts, ix., 4.)

ii. "*He sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers*" (v. 7); with the Jews this was literally fulfilled by the Roman army, the instrument of God's chastisement; so too we read, "*O Assyrian, the rod of MINE anger*" (Isaiah, x., 5); "*Nebuchadrezzar My servant* (Jer., xxv., 9); with the world at large it will be the hosts of avenging angels at the last day.

iii. "*And burned up their city*" (v. 7); their city no longer His city; so "*YOUR house is left unto you desolate.*" (S. Matt., xxiii., 38.) *Your house not Mine.*

Affections.—Realize the danger of neglecting GOD's calls in whatever form they come; pray for an obedient heart; resolve to examine how you carry out your Meditation resolutions.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.

"And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.—S. Matt., xxii., 11-15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have your place there.

This episode in the parable of the marriage of the king's son warns us against the danger of nominally accepting God's calls, but not rising up to their responsibilities.

I. Consider the Judgment :

i. The Scrutiny ; "*the king came in to see the guests*" ; in the light of absolute truth that examination will be made at the General Judgment of the last day.

ii. The Question ; "*How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?*" the sinner will be allowed to make his defence, to plead his cause, but no specious excuse can he speak, nothing but truth can his lips utter there, so he is speechless !

iii. The Sentence ; "*cast him into outer darkness*" ; no better off than those who refused to come, for by accepting the call he acknowledged his responsibility to prepare for it. "*Many are called, but few chosen.*"

II. Consider the Wedding Garment :

i. The Eastern custom of the king providing a garment for each guest, though disputed, certainly sometimes prevailed, but, even if this were not so, it was a slight to the king to appear in unsuitable dress.

ii. What is the wedding garment of the soul? "*Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*" (Heb. xii., 14) ; "*I put on righteousness and it clothed me*" (Job, xxix., 14). Righteousness is of two sorts, (a.) Imparted, the Righteousness of CHRIST imparted to us through the Sacraments of grace ; (b.) Habitual, the good works of our lives, which are the result of using this grace.

iii. The garment of the soul is its character ; the work of our life here is to weave this garment. Tapestry workers, looking up at their pattern, work it on the wrong side of the stuff, and, when finished, the stuff is turned, and the pattern is seen ; so we have as our pattern, the life of our LORD, and every action of our life is a stitch in the wedding garment of the soul, in forming its habit ; in this world we see but the ragged ends, &c., but in the world to come it will be reversed, and the King will come in to see how far in our character we have reproduced the feature of His Son.

III. Consider some lessons here :

i. The last Parable, that of the Wicked Husbandman, led me to ask, Am I rising up to God's demands, producing fruit? this, Am I obeying His calls, and accepting His gifts? and if so, am I doing it worthily, *i. e.*, with careful preparation?

ii. This man really thought he was good enough, the fact that he took his seat with the rest proves this ; but, when the scrutiny took place, he found he was not, that he had made a mistake ; but too late, it was for eternity. Am I resting in the thought that I am good enough? or am I putting forth every energy to prepare the wedding garment?

iii. "*Many are called, but few are chosen*" ; I am among the many, shall I be among the few? What is the habit of my life, the clothing of my soul, my character?

Affections.—Realize the strictness of the judgment ; pray that you may find mercy in that day ; resolve to do all your actions to-day with the thought that you are weaving the garment that your soul will wear for eternity.

THURSDAY AFTER TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE ELEMENT OF WINE.

“Wine that maketh glad the heart of man.”—Ps., civ., 15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the soldier with the spear opening our LORD's most sacred Side, and the Blood and Water pouring out.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your soul may be cleansed and refreshed by that most Precious Blood.

The Element of Wine, chosen by our LORD as one of the outward signs of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, like the Bread teaches us many lessons.

I. Consider Wine as a type of the Precious Blood:

i. It is the fruit of the vine; our LORD says, “*I am the true Vine.*” (S. John, xv., 1.)

ii. It is obtained from the grape by pressing or treading; our LORD says by His prophet, “*I have trodden the Wine-press alone.*” (Isaiah, lxiii., 3.) It was in Gethsemane, the olive-press, that His Agony caused the Blood-Sweat.

iii. The wine of the Eucharist is mingled with water, because from our LORD's opened Side there poured forth Blood and Water.

II. Consider the Vine as a type:

i. Of CHRIST; He uses it in this sense Himself.

ii. Of His Church; “*Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt. . . . Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.*” (Ps., lxxx., 8-14.)

iii. Of ourselves; “*I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*” (S. John, xv., 5.)

III. Consider how the Vine is grown:

i. It grows best on a sandy soil, not in the rich earth; so do we grow in the barren soil of this world.

ii. In some places they put tiles in the ground under the vines to prevent the roots from striking too far down, in order that all the strength of the vine may be expended in its upward growth; so does the Providence of God put many a Cross into our life to prevent us becoming too deeply rooted in this world, to help to raise us heavenward.

iii. The vines which produce the best grapes have but few leaves, and are unsightly in appearance, and not luxuriant in growth, all their strength being put forth in the production of fruit; so with the Christian, his virtues are incompatible with ostentation; a contrast here to the barren fig-tree, which was all leaves and no fruit.

IV. Consider the difference between the outward signs of the two great Sacraments:

i. In Baptism, Water is the element, the sign of creation or birth; in the Eucharist, Bread and Wine, the sign of sustenance, and growth, or food.

ii. Baptism is *generally* necessary, for without creation or birth there can be no existence; the Holy Eucharist is also *generally* necessary, for without food existence cannot be prolonged.

iii. Baptism is administered but once, for we can only be born once; the Eucharist many times, for we need food continually.

Affections.—Realize the necessity of union with CHRIST; pray that this union may never be severed by sin; resolve to examine whether your life is most productive of fruit or leaves, of Christian virtues or mere professions of religion.

FRIDAY AFTER TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA, I.

"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."—S. John, v., 5-9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the impotent man lying helpless by the pool.

PRELUDE II.—Pray our LORD to have compassion on your infirmities.

We have here a man who had been suffering from his disease for a very long time, and who, for a considerable time at least, had been doing what little he could to get himself healed. He knew not of CHRIST, but was patiently endeavouring to make use of the means of help he did know of, viz., the pool.

I. Consider the man's condition :

i. He had been ill for thirty-eight years, and yet he had not given up all hope.
ii. *"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew,"* &c.; it was because He saw him lying by the side of the pool, struggling with the disease, not giving up to it, that He helped him.

iii. So now a parallel case would be that of one, without knowledge of the Church, but thoroughly weary of the bondage of the world and of sin, who is trying to overcome his infirmity by mere moral means, in which, while they do not cure him, he perseveres, hoping and longing for better things.

II. Consider our LORD's question, and his answer :

i. *"Wilt thou be made whole"*; seemingly a useless question, really a most important one. Here our LORD heals without previous faith, but not without the co-operation of the man's will; the question is asked (a.) to show free-will; his own will through sin had brought on the malady, his own will looking to CHRIST must bring the remedy; and (b.) to awaken the desire of being healed and hope in our LORD's power to aid.

ii. *"Sir, I have no man,"* &c.; he does not answer directly, and yet by his answer shows how earnestly he wills to be made whole, and explains why he is not. Sin destroys all power of help; for the sinner has no help in himself, and sin cuts him off from the Communion of Saints, and he has no help in others. This was the most prevailing appeal he could have made, a confession of helplessness; in this he becomes like the man of sorrows, *"I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man."* (Ps., lxix., 21.)

iii. So now the sinner needs two things, an earnest wish to be healed, and a realization of his own utter helplessness.

III. Consider our LORD's command, and its result :

i. A temporal blessing; the healing of his body is given him.
ii. A command, to carry his bed; to violate his prejudices.
iii. So now our LORD gives temporal gifts, and a command that follows each, to do something for Him, and He waits to see if gratitude and obedience make it possible for Him to give more, the Spiritual gift which the soul needs.

Affections.—Realize your own weakness, and the insufficiency of all human aid; pray for mercy; resolve to do some act to show your gratitude for past blessings.

SATURDAY AFTER TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA, II.

"And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath."—S. John, v., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the man carrying his bed.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace patiently to bear the results of your sins in their temporal punishment.

The command of our LORD to do what popular prejudice called wrong was the crisis in this man's spiritual life. He is an illustration of one who has received great help from the Church and begins carrying out her rules, though without quite understanding them; these practices are attacked by his former friends, and he defends them on the ground of the benefit he has received from the Church, he is led to enquire more, and ends by the remission of his sins and a thorough knowledge of the Catholic Faith.

I. Consider the crisis of the man's spiritual life:

i. The man obeys, and carries his bed, and the people murmur; he justifies his act by telling them of the benefits he has received from Him Who commanded it.

ii. But he "*wist not who it was*" (v. 13); he is still very ignorant.

iii. "*Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple*" (v. 14); he is not only obedient, but grateful; and instead of going home to his old life, goes to God's house; do we too often accept blessings as a matter of course, and neglect to make any thanksgiving?

II. Consider our LORD's meeting with the man in the temple:

i. "*Thou art made whole*"; he has been tried, and found obedient and grateful, and now receives the further spiritual blessing, the remission of sins.

ii. "*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*"; a word of counsel, also showing that his disease was a result of sin.

iii. He sees and knows our LORD in the temple, he knew Him not in the crowd, but after bearing his bed (the Cross) he learns to know JESUS. "Seek not CHRIST in the crowd."

III. Consider some lessons:

i. Never to despair, but always to struggle on; when the night is darkest, it is nearest the dawn; when we feel most hopeless, help may be very near.

ii. Always to obey, not waiting to ask or to understand the reason, but always to obey the commands of GOD and His Church.

iii. To bear patiently the penance of our sins; this man had to carry his bed after he was healed, before, it had carried him; so after the sin is absolved, which has so long held us captive, we still have to bear as a penance the weakness resulting from it, and perhaps the attacks of temptation to go back to it.

Affections.—Realize that temptation is often the penance for past sin; pray for a spirit of obedient perseverance; resolve to take up your Cross.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

"And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death."—S. John, iv., 46-47.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the agonized father tearing himself from his child's death-bed to go himself and seek aid from CHRIST.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that all troubles may drive you to prayer.

We have in this courtier a soul in the Church, but with dormant faith and imperfect views of prayer. The key to our LORD's dealing with him seems to be, first to call into action the torpid faith, then to teach the true laws of prayer, and finally to strengthen and perfect the faith by trial, and to grant the prayer.

I. Consider the awakening of faith :

i. GOD sends a need or trouble which drives the soul to Him in prayer ; this man's faith was only called forth by pressing trouble, his son's sickness, and it was not till earthly aid had failed, and he was at the point of death, that he sought heavenly help. How often sorrow drives the soul to CHRIST ; this is one of its uses.

ii. Prayer must be founded on faith ; the poor father has to show his faith by action, leaving his dying child to journey to Cana, some twenty-five miles.

II. Consider the laws of prayer enunciated by our LORD :

i. *"Besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death."* The expression by man of a heartfelt need is the first law of prayer.

ii. *"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe"* (v. 48). Our LORD teaches that the soul must not always expect a visible answer to its prayer, but must have faith that it will be answered, as best for it, even without any sign. This man's faith at first was making the answer to his prayer a condition of its very existence ; such prayer is indeed imperfect. Our LORD teaches trustful resignation as the second law of prayer.

iii. *"Sir, come down ere my child die"* (v. 49). Our LORD next teaches perseverance in prayer. After we have learnt the last lesson, we may make the same prayer many times, and even try to hasten the answer. Impatience with resignation is the third law of prayer.

iv. *"Go thy way ; thy son liveth"* (v. 50). We must act on our prayers, and thus prove our faith. CHRIST tells the soul its prayer is heard, and sends it back without any sign, even as He sent the ten lepers to the priest.—S. Luke, xvii., 14. We must accept as the answer GOD's Providence, however different to our expectations it may be. The man went his way, and with such perfect faith in our LORD's words that he did not return to his child till the next day, though it was then only 1 P. M.

III. Consider the reward of faith :

i. The next day our LORD vouchsafes to the soul light to see how wonderfully its prayer had been answered. The nobleman found he had been right in accepting that answer and going on his way ; so it often is now, that after a time we see all was right that seemed most wrong.

ii. If not now, certainly on that glad to-morrow of the Resurrection, it will be one of our joys to see how every *prayer* was answered. Did we pray for something all our life, ah ! the answer was the greatest gift, the gift of a habit of prayer ! On the morrow when he reached home : let us trustfully wait till that to-morrow when we reach Home, Heaven, and we shall not be disappointed.

iii. So our LORD sometimes deals with us in regard to our intercession for those we love, whose souls seem dying. We see no change when we lose sight of them, but we may, when we reach home and find them there.

Affections.—Realize GOD's watchful care ; pray for more faith ; resolve to let your needs drive you to GOD in earnest prayer.

MONDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

REPENTANCE.

"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father."—S. Luke, iii., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the crowd on the banks of the Jordan, listening to these words, and, stirred to their soul's depths, asking, “ *What shall we do?* ” (v. 12).

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of true penitence.

The sermons of S. John Baptist are chiefly three, let us consider them : His teaching may be summed up in the word Prepare,—and first comes the Preparation of penitence, the negative work of clearing away the obstacles to the coming of JESUS into our hearts, the removal of our sins.

I. Consider what Repentance is :

i. It is a grace and a work, the grace we must seek by earnest prayer, the work we must do under the guidance of the HOLY GHOST.

ii. It is a change of heart, of mind, of life, one of the most valuable of the soul's treasures, but one most often counterfeited.

iii. It is to be known and judged of only by its fruits, as in the case of the Corinthians, “ *Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!* ” (II. Cor., vii., 11.) S. Paul here gives the fruits of a real repentance.

II. Consider the three parts of repentance, and their fruits, as given by S. Paul :

i. Contrition ; *Indignation*—with sin and with self, a hatred of sin ; *Fear*—distrust of self, and therefore careful use of Prayer, and Sacraments ; *Desire*—“ *My soul thirsteth for Thee.* ” (Ps., lxiii., 2.)

ii. Confession ; “ *Clearing of yourselves* ” ; my confessions, what are they ?

iii. Satisfaction ; *Carefulness*—occasions of sin avoided, counsel exactly followed ; *Zeal*—for the glory of God, for the salvation of others ; *Revenge*—self-denial, mortification, love of the Cross.

III. Consider further of repentance :

i. It is the foundation of our spiritual life, the rock on which it has to stand ; how many a fair structure of spiritual life falls in the presence of trial, because built only on the sand of an unreal repentance !—S. Matt., vii., 24-28.

ii. It must come from a realization of the *guilt* of sin as against God ; it is the greatest work we can do for God ; it is of universal necessity, our position socially or religiously does not dispense it ; “ *begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father.* ”

iii. We may analyze our life in its minutest details, make our confessions with the greatest regularity, and yet be gradually drifting away from penitence. It must be a life-long work, and must be tested by its fruits.

Affections.—Realize the malice of sin ; pray that God will show you what you must do in the way of penitence ; resolve to examine whether the fruits of penitence given by S. Paul are to be found in your life.

TUESDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PASSION.

"Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world."—S. John, i., 29.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD dying on the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray Him to take away all your sins.

The second great sermon of S. John Baptist is on the Passion; when we have learned to know ourselves and our sins, we are called to raise our eyes from the sad sight of our own misery, and to gaze on the far sadder sight of our LORD's Sufferings; when we have learned what our sins are we must learn their result in the Passion of JESUS; so let us meditate on the Passion as teaching us what sin is, and how we are to meet it in the battle of life.

I. Consider the Passion as a witness:

i. To the Existence of sin; this most necessary, especially in a day when sin is often looked upon rather as an unhealthy moral atmosphere, which, when we are removed from it, leaves no lasting ill effects; sin is looked on rather as an idea than a fact; the Passion stands out the one great fact of history, and, as every effect must have a cause, it witnesses to the fact of the real existence of sin.

ii. To the Malice of sin; sin is the one disintegrating force in the world; look at the fairest human form the world has ever seen, the Son of God, perfectly Pure and Holy, but sin has crucified Him; the little child in its cradle and the old man tottering to the grave, sin is at work in both; not one spot on earth, however glorious, however beautiful, but the blighting breath of sin is there, spoiling all, killing all.

iii. To the Results of sin; tears, devastation, ruin everywhere; all the pains of body, all the darkness of mind, all the sorrow of soul, all are the results of sin in man's nature; in the Passion we see them concentrated; but not only in man's nature, but the crumbling ruins of ancient buildings, the withered leaves of Autumn, all alike speak of the wages of sin, Death.

iv. To the Conquest of sin; that sin is to be conquered only by bearing its results here, looking to a perfect freedom from it hereafter; in the Passion sin over-reached itself, and in the Death of its Victim received its defeat.

II. Consider the Passion as an Example of how we are to meet sin:

i. With Love; the tendency of suffering, unsanctified by grace, is to make us hard, bitter, and selfish; in the prayer for His murderers, in the promise to the penitent thief, in the provision for His Mother and S. John, our LORD teaches us unselfish love.

ii. With Courage; the exquisitely sensitive human nature of our LORD shrank from the suffering before it, but the moral courage of that Perfect Man never faltered for a moment.

iii. With Patience; slowly the moments of the Passion passed, but no signs of impatience were seen, He endured unto the end; and so must we in our struggle with sin, in our carrying the Cross.

iv. In Obedience; He was obedient even unto death to His Father's Will; the laws of GOD must be like the nails fastening us to the Cross; we cannot come down without breaking them, therefore let us rather resolve to die there.

Affections.—Realize that all your sufferings are the results of sin in the world; pray that they may be accepted in union with the merits of CHRIST's Passion; resolve to make no compromise with sin.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth."—S. Luke, iii., 4-5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate an ancient Roman road, the labour of years but lasting for centuries, levelling alike hill and valley.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the way of the **LORD** may be prepared in your heart.

The obstacles having been removed by penitence, the pattern having been given in the Passion of **JESUS**, we come now to the positive work of preparation for **CHRIST** in the formation of character.

I. Consider the four points to which S. John Baptist directs our attention:

i. *"Every valley shall be filled."* This calls us to remedy the *defects* in our character, to acquire the virtues which we find we are most wanting in; and brings before us, as the means by which this may be accomplished, the purpose and work of temptation; for the effect of temptation resisted is the development of virtue. Satan attacks our weakest parts, and succeeds—either in breaking them down altogether, or in making them strong. Temptation fills the valleys.

ii. *"Every mountain and hill shall be brought low."* Here we have the eradication of vices, not so much sins which can be removed by an act of penitence, as bad habits, the result of sins, which require a long penitential struggle, after the sin is forgiven, to overcome. This is generally the work of the Cross in our life, it must be recognized, and patiently accepted.

iii. *"The crooked shall be made straight."* After these two great works have been at least fairly begun, how much there is still in the character which is not perfectly straightforward and real, how many little insincerities, and crooked ways; to remedy these must be the next step; as the Light of the **HOLY SPIRIT** shows us more clearly what our faults are, the grace of the **HOLY SPIRIT** will enable us gradually to conquer them.

iv. *"The rough ways shall be made smooth."* This is the last, the final adornment of Christian character, the disappearance of all the little roughnesses of character, and the gradual progress in the imitation of **CHRIST**.

II. Consider the three sermons of S. John as summed up in the three prayers:

- i. **LORD**, shew me myself.—Repentance.
- ii. **LORD**, shew me Thyself.—The Passion.

iii. **LORD**, make me like Thyself.—The Formation of Character.

Affections.—Realize how much remains to be done in the preparation of your soul for **CHRIST**; pray, "**LORD**, make me like Thyself"; resolve to attack and to try to conquer one sin.

THURSDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PREPARATION OF PENITENCE.

"They that sow in tears: shall reap in joy."—Ps., cxxvi., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD upon the Cross bearing all our sins.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may approach your Communions with a penitent heart.

We must always prepare for the Holy Communion with penitence. We can not walk through this world without its dust settling on us. We may, by watchfulness and prayer, keep free from great sins, but the little ones will continually find entrance to our hearts. *"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet"* (S. John, xiii., 10), but he does need this; and so before each Communion we should always go through, more or less thoroughly, the three parts of penitence.

I. Consider our Contrition:

i. We must begin with self-examination, that we may know our state, and the nearer we are to GOD the more thorough this will be; how clearly the minute particles of dust are seen in the sunbeam in a room! They are not caused by the light, but revealed by it; they were there before, though unrecognized; so, if the light of GOD's Presence is shining in our soul, it will always show us many imperfections to be repented of.

ii. In the Passion of our LORD, of which the Holy Eucharist is the Memorial, we shall see the result of all our sins toward Him, and the measure of His love for us.

iii. The result of this will be an act of Contrition, of a sorrow for our sins which flows from love of Him. Let us never venture to approach our Communion without this; much of the benefit we receive will depend on it.

II. Consider our Confession:

i. The feeling of Contrition for our sins will lead to a desire to get rid of them, to be cleansed from them; that sin which clings to us was our own choice, and only by a deliberate act of our will can it be put away by penitence.

ii. We shall feel the necessity of emptying our soul that JESUS may fill it. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven"* (S. Matt., v., 3); *i. e.*, Blessed are those that empty themselves of the world and self, for they shall be filled with CHRIST.

iii. The result of this will be our Confession to GOD of all those sins which by our examination we have discovered; and if we feel that any of them have forfeited grace, *i. e.*, have been mortal sins, then we shall seek Absolution before we venture to approach the Altar.

III. Consider our Satisfaction:

i. Our Contrition will still further manifest itself in an amended life; we shall not only resolve to give up those sins to which we have yielded, but we shall consider whether we can do anything to prove our penitence, by apologizing for wrongs done to others, and, if in our power, making amends.

ii. We shall at once begin carefully to perform duties which we find we have neglected, whether toward GOD or our neighbour, not waiting till after our Communion for this.

iii. Perhaps we shall think of some act for GOD's glory, which we may do by way of reparation.

Affections.—Realize the importance of a thorough preparation for Holy Communion; pray for light to see yourself; resolve on some act of reparation for your sins.

FRIDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.—S. Matt., xxv., 1-2.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the horror of the foolish virgins when they discover that their lamps are going out.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligent perseverance in using all the means of grace.

This parable, like that of the Talents which follows it, is addressed not to the godless, but to those who in their external life seem to be waiting for the coming of their **LORD**, and warns against the danger of neglecting to *frequent* the Sacraments.

I. Consider the preparation for the Watch :

i. They all start equally well, with the same end and object, and the same means for attaining it ; all were Virgins, all companions of the Bride, all furnished with brightly burning lamps.

ii. The going forth to meet the Bridegroom represents the breaking with the world, and waiting in the Church, where they know the Bridegroom will come ; the lamps ourselves, the earthen vessels in which the light is put at Baptism ; the oil, grace supplied by prayer and Sacraments.

iii. The difference between the wise and foolish virgins is that the latter made no provision for keeping the lamps burning in case of a long period of waiting ; a striking contrast to the servant who said in his heart, "*My Lord delayeth his coming.*" (S. Matt., xxiv., 48.)

II. Consider the Coming of the Bridegroom :

i. At midnight the expected cry is heard, all arise and trim their lamps ; this may be taken for the last self-examination, as we realize that death approaches, and self-deception falls off, and we see ourselves as we are.

ii. The foolish discover the state of their soul ; as in self-examination they trim their lamps, and turn up the wick, the flickering, expiring flame reveals the fact that the oil is exhausted, and the cry, "*Our lamps are going out*" (*σβέννυνται*), v. 8, tells of their anguish and despair.

iii. "*Give us of your oil*" (v. 8) ; the reason of the refusal, there is not sufficient for both, individual responsibility ; the wife *cannot* save the husband.

III. Consider the doom of the foolish virgins :

i. "*Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves*" (v. 9) ; go to the authorized priests of the Church, whose work it is to dispense the Sacraments of grace. Good advice, but too late !

ii. They go and buy ; a death-bed confession, the last Sacraments administered, but too late ! The right dispositions are wanting, the door closed, they are shut out in the darkness ; for the wise virgins, the closed door only shuts out all possibility of further temptation.

iii. Sacraments are to be *frequented* ; that door is open now.—Rev., iv., 1. How awfully solemn is the warning ! how dangerous to give up any good habit and practice of devotion ! When did you make your last good Communion ? your last good confession ? Will this be your bitter cry at the hour of death ?

Affections.—Realize the need of keeping up a constant supply of grace ; pray that you may be found ready when the Bridegroom comes ; resolve to examine whether you are neglecting any spiritual exercise that you once practiced.

SATURDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

GOD'S QUESTION TO MAN.

"Why will ye die?"—Ezek., xviii., 31.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD GOD asking this question of the world.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for mercy.

Consider the four distinct ways in which this question may be asked:

i. *"Why will ye die?"* This refers, of course, to spiritual death here, to eternal death hereafter; but who wills to *die?* those who are choosing such a life here as they know will lead to it. We are running a race which must result in one of two rewards, life or death, happiness or misery; and GOD stops those who are choosing the broad path, and asks this question.

ii. *"Why will ye die?"* Who were the "ye?" the Israelites, GOD's chosen people, for whom He had done so much, He had protected or delivered them from so many dangers, showered upon them so many blessings, why should they, of all people, choose death? and what has not GOD done for you? He has watched over your life, supplied all your needs, both of body and soul, brought you in contact with His truth.

iii. *"Why will ye die?"* This may seem the strangest way of asking the question, for few would like to admit that they *will* to die; and yet all who are not earnestly striving for life eternal are practically willing to die, for they are choosing the path which must lead to eternal reprobation, and here sin is traced to its seat in the Will, and we are reminded of the responsibility which free-will entails.

iv. *"Why will ye die?"* Each must answer this for himself, there are so many causes of spiritual death, all to be traced ultimately to the Tempter of souls, but approaching us through countless channels; with one it is a darling sin, with another neglect of the means of grace, with a third the engrossing claims of the world; let me try to find out what is my especial danger.

Affections.—Realize that there can be but one of two ends to this life; pray that you may be delivered from self-deception; resolve to struggle more faithfully against your especial temptation.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain King, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents." —S. Matt., xviii., 23-24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Unmerciful Servant leaving the King's presence.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that by the earnestness of your life, and your charity to others, you may show that you have not sought God's pardon in vain.

This is the first parable in which God appears as a King. This reckoning is not the final reckoning at the day of Judgment, but a call to penitence in this life.

I. Consider the unlimited mercy of God :

i. The parable arose out of a question of S. Peter's, "*How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?*" (v. 21.) Our Lord's answer shows that there is no limit to the number of times that God will forgive, as often as the sinner turns to God with true penitence.

ii. The sum remitted, 10,000 talents, was so enormous that it shows that there is no limit to the amount of sin God forgives;—over against the Ten Commandments, which he ought to have kept, are the 10,000 talents, the debts which he has incurred.

iii. This man is not a penitent, he does not come voluntarily, but is brought before the King. The having nothing to pay expresses the utter poverty of every child of Adam in God's presence; "*I will pay thee all*" (v. 26), shows how little this man realizes his relation to God.

II. Consider the condition of forgiveness :

i. We must forgive. This man when forgiven might have remained in the kingdom of grace, but then he must show grace. He "*went out*" (v. 28), out from God's presence, forgetting all that he had been forgiven, and meets his fellow servant, who pleads with him in the same words he himself had used, but in vain; the man, who recognizes not his own guilt, is ever ready to exclaim with David at the time of his worst sin, "*The man that hath done this thing shall surely die.*" (II. Sam., xii., 5.)

ii. The condition of forgiving others comes from the very principle of love; love is the result of being forgiven, the absence of love is the proof that the soul is not forgiven (S. Luke, vii., 41-48); but if we love God we must love our neighbour; for S. John's assertion, "*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar*" (I. S. John, iv., 20), is proved by the very nature of love, for it can no more co-exist with hatred, or a grudging, unforgiving spirit, than light with darkness, or cold with heat. Thus forgiveness follows true penitence, love follows this being forgiven, and produces, as its necessary fruit, the forgiveness of our neighbors; this condition is therefore not an arbitrary, but a necessary one.

iii. The Servants are sorry, the King angry. In man the consciousness that whatever sin he sees come to ripeness in another exists in its germ in his own heart, must make sorrow his predominant feeling in sight of sin. In God's pure Eyes a hatred of sin makes anger His attitude in regard to sin; as the servants here, so the Saints under the Altar complain. —Rev. vi., 10.

III. Consider how the old debts now come back upon the unmerciful servant :

i. He goes back into the darkness he has made for himself by his sins, out of which he had been lifted into the kingdom of light by God's forgiveness;—the condition is not fulfilled, and so he falls back.

ii. Perhaps we are intended to see here that forgiveness of guilt does not remove the temporal consequences of sin, such as force of temptation; for the drunkard, who has reformed, when he falls again into his old sin, brings back upon himself all the force of the old habit.

iii. Perhaps, too, we may consider this, as indeed it is, as a warning against the dangers of receiving absolution without right disposition of heart, and true penitence. This man had in word confessed his debts, and asked for pardon; he had received formal absolution, but not having the right disposition he cannot appropriate the gift, and his sin still remains with him. Is this ever my case?

Affections.—Realize the need of real penitence; pray for charity; resolve to pray every day for a week for some person, who has wronged you, and who needs your forgiveness.

MONDAY AFTER TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TALENTS.

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey."—S. Matt., xxv., 14-16.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD receiving the account of His servants' work.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligence in God's service.

The relation of masters and slaves in those days was different from that of masters and servants now; the slaves were often artisans, or allowed to engage freely in business, bringing to their master a share of their profits.

I. Consider the three great events foreshadowed in this parable:

i. The Ascension; when our LORD left this earth to travel to that land, which is very far off, to prepare a place for us, and to return to take us there.

ii. The gift of the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost; when to His own servants He gave those different gifts of grace, all of which are by the same Holy Spirit (I. Cor., xii., 1-12); not that we are to confine the distribution of His goods to this.

iii. The Second Advent; when "*after a long time*" He shall return to examine the work of His servants in the day of the General Judgment.

II. Consider the distribution of goods:

i. The Talents; all endowments, faculties, and powers, both natural and spiritual.

ii. "*To every man according to his several ability;*" the gifts are as the capacity of the vessel, but in each case it is filled; prepared for different spheres of labour, but each fitted for his own sphere, and perfectly equipped for that work to which he is called.

iii. Fidelity will widen the vessel, even as unfaithfulness will contract it; he who has but two, or even one talent, by diligence may gain five; while he that has five may add to them but one.

III. Consider the history of the faithful servant:

i. We are told how each spent that time, so full of temptation, while their LORD was away; two in diligent labour, one in idleness (vv. 16-19).

ii. The reckoning takes place (vv. 19-24), and it is found that the gains of the faithful servants are in proportion to their gifts; a contrast to the parable of the Pounds (S. Luke, xix., 11-28), where all have the same gift, but a different result. Here we are taught that, according to what is given, will it be required of us; there that as men differ in zeal and diligence, so will they differ in the amount of their spiritual gains.

iii. As the gain had been in proportion to their gifts, so the commendation and reward of each is exactly the same (vv. 21, 23). In the confidence with which the faithful servants deliver their account, we have an example of boldness in the day of Judgment, and are reminded of the confidence of S. Paul.—I. Thess., ii., 19; II. Tim., iv., 7-8.

Affections.—Realize the responsibility of life; pray that you may be found faithful unto death; resolve to examine what talents you are neglecting to improve.

TUESDAY AFTER TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SLOTHFUL SERVANT.

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."—S. Matt., xxv., 24-26.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the slothful servant making his excuse.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* (Phil., ii., 12.)

I. Consider the contrast between this parable and that which precedes it :

i. Both are addressed to religious people, who recognize that they have a relation to GOD. The Virgins are represented as waiting, the Servants as working for their LORD; the one the contemplative, the other the active life; the one shows the inner spiritual life, the other its external manifestation in work; the one teaches the need of diligence in keeping up the supply of grace; the other the need of diligence in using the grace supplied.

ii. That of the Virgins exhibits the perils of the Sanguine temperament, that of the Servants those of the Melancholic; the one is a warning against declension and decay in the inner life, the other against indolence in the outer life; the former shows the danger of presumption arising from pride, the latter that of despair coming from sloth; the one was too bold, the other not bold enough; the one thought it too easy a thing to serve GOD, the other thought it too hard.

II. Consider the sin of the slothful servant :

i. He had not wasted his Master's goods, like the Unjust Steward; nor spent all, like the Prodigal; nor was he 10,000 talents in debt, like the Unmerciful Servant; his guilt was shrinking from the responsibilities of his vocation, and so living a useless life; he is called the Useless Servant (*αχρεῖος*), v. 30.

ii. He represents those who, called to a sphere of active work in GOD's Kingdom, shrink from the toil it involves, sometimes with a false humility saying, "The cares of my own soul are enough," or "the responsibilities of spiritual work are too awful," forgetting that they will be judged by the vocation to which they are called, not by the work they have chosen.

iii. It is the man with but one talent who is exhibited to us as the defaulter, in order that none may excuse himself on the plea, "I can do so little for GOD or His Church, that it matters not if that little be left undone;" it is not the amount, but the fidelity of our work, which will make the difference in the end.

III. Consider his excuse, and its answer :

i. His excuse was a confession of his ignorance of GOD: "I knew Thee." Ah, no! That was the difficulty, he had never known GOD; for to know Him is to love Him, and serve Him. According to his own character does a man regard GOD, "With the holy Thou shalt be Holy," &c. (Ps., xviii., 25-26.) This man had the spirit of a slave, and regarded GOD as a Hard Master, and His service as exacting bondage; an important warning to us.

ii. The excuse is his own condemnation: "If I were such as you thought me the more reason to have done me justice;" the lost will condemn themselves in the day of Judgment.

iii. The Judgment is partly natural, partly penal :

(a.) Natural; for as the muscles grow or waste, according to exercise, so the gradual withdrawing of the talent had been going on; in mercy gradually, so that, till all was lost, all might be recovered; many warnings to "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" (Rev., iii., 2); but this servant never awoke to a sense of his danger till too late; and when the sentence of forfeiture of the unused talent was pronounced, the forfeiture had in some sense already taken place.

(b.) Penal; "Cast the useless servant into outer darkness" (v. 30), the same end as the hardened sinner; for "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people who forget GOD." (Ps., ix., 17.)

Affections.—Realize your responsibility for GOD's gifts; pray that you may know GOD; resolve to do some definite work for GOD.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

S. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE PHILIPPIANS.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."—Phil. i., 9-12.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Paul, amid many sorrows and disappointments, with joy writing to the faithful Philippians, the first fruits of his work in Europe.

PRELUDE II.—Pray S. Paul's prayer for yourself.

I. Consider the gifts for the increase of which S. Paul prays:

i. Love; its existence in the Philippians is recognized, but its deficiency is hinted at in the prayer that it "*may abound yet more and more*"; Love the sovereign virtue, do not we need an increase of it?

ii. Knowledge; *ἐπιγνώσις*, accurate knowledge of theoretical and practical truth, deals with general principles.

iii. Judgment; *αἱσθησίς* deals with the practical application of truth; here it signifies spiritual discernment, moral tact; these two, knowledge and judgment, are not departments of Love, but the safeguards by which Love is saved from being ill-judged and misplaced.

II. Consider the purpose of this increase in Love, Knowledge, and Judgment:

i. "*That ye may approve things that are excellent*"; (lit.: that ye may distinguish things that are different); *i. e.*, choosing the good, and refusing the evil.

ii. "*That ye may be sincere*"; (*ειλικρινεῖς* signifies that which is proved in the sunlight) the great need in religion to have a single eye, to be thoroughly straightforward, simple, sincere; for "*God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*" (S. John, iv., 24.)

iii. "*And without offence*" (*ἀπρόσκοποι*, without stumbling); these two characteristics of Christian life are related to each other as the positive and the negative. "*Till the day of Christ*"—better, "*Against the day of CHRIST.*" These virtues are to be cultivated with reference to the day of Judgment.

III. Consider the result of such a life:

i. "*Being filled with the fruits of righteousness*"; these fruits are to be the result of righteousness, *i. e.*, of a holy life; it is the righteousness of sanctification, to which S. Paul here refers, not the righteousness of justification.

ii. "*Which are by Jesus Christ*"; these works must be done in grace; they must be the fruit of a communication of the life of CHRIST to His own.

iii. "*Unto the praise and glory of God*"; the only true aim of all human effort. Here we see the result of the principle of love in its completion.

Affections.—Realize how little you do for the glory of GOD; pray for love, knowledge, judgment, and sincerity; resolve to do some one act for the glory of GOD.

THURSDAY AFTER TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE PREPARATION OF DEVOTION.

“And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.”—S. Luke, xxiii., 56.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the holy women preparing their spices for the Body of JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may rightly prepare to receive the Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The immediate preparation for the Holy Eucharist is of two kinds, that of Penitence, and that of Devotion; if we neglect the former we run the risk of making a bad Communion; if the latter, of losing much of the benefits of Communion. We may consider the Preparation of Devotion under the exercise of the three theological virtues.

I. Consider the exercise of our Faith :

- i. By acts of Faith made briefly, but frequently, and earnestly.
- ii. By a Meditation on the Holy Eucharist, by which the Eye of faith is trained to gaze into this great Mystery.
- iii. By some definite, though simple, resolution with which we determine to come to our Communion, and for the carrying out of which we there seek grace.

II. Consider the exercise of our Hope :

- i. By acts of Hope, our Faith having revealed to us the good things GOD has prepared in the Holy Eucharist for them that love Him, our Hope leads us to hunger and thirst after them, and to express this by ejaculatory prayers.
- ii. By prayers for our own needs, and those of others, that this Communion may be unto us, and to them, the healing and protection both of soul and body, and that we may all receive It worthily.
- iii. By saying carefully the proper Office of Preparation; and by the direction of the Intention, *i. e.*, by the determination of the special objects, for which we propose to receive this particular Communion.

III. Consider the exercise of our Charity :

- i. By aspirations, and acts of love.
- ii. By setting apart some offering as a mark of our love.
- iii. The holy women spent their Friday in preparing spices and ointments for the Body of JESUS, which they brought very early on the morning of the first day of the week; so let us spend our Fridays in penitence and prayer, that we may bring our spices and ointments of Faith, Hope, and Charity, when we come, early each Sunday morning, to our weekly Communion. “*O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee.*” (Ps., lxiii., 1.)

Affections.—Make Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love; pray that you may leave nothing undone in your preparation for Communion; resolve on some special object for which you will make your next Communion.

FRIDAY AFTER TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE SECOND MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

"And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."—S. John, xxi., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing upon the shore watching His Apostles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of final perseverance.

I. Consider this miracle, together with the similar one in S. Luke, v., as a prophecy of the whole history of the Church of CHRIST in time and in eternity—the earlier miracle picturing the vicissitudes of the Church Militant, this the setting up of the Church Triumphant—the difference of the details bringing out the contrasts between the state of the Church here and hereafter.

II. Consider the points of contrast in the miracles:

i. In the first CHRIST is on the moving waters, here on the firm shore; so our LORD shared the dangers and labours of His Church on earth, and will reign for ever over His Church in heaven.

ii. Then the direction as to where the net is to be cast, here on the right side; so the Church Militant includes all, both good and bad, within its net; the Church Triumphant only those on the Right Hand, the finally saved.

iii. There the net gathers of all sorts; here only great fish; so none but the Saints in heaven.

iv. There the fish are gathered into the ship, here on to the shore; now by Baptism people are gathered into the Church Visible, then after judgment the elect will stand with their LORD on the firm shores of eternity, no longer tossing on the changing waves of this world.

v. There a great multitude of fish, here an exact number, 153, denoting the number of the elect, that it is, and ever has been a fixed number.

vi. There the net brake, here it is not broken; there are no schisms in heaven.

vii. There the labourers are called Fishers of men, here they sit down and feast with CHRIST.

III. Consider further:

i. *"On this wise showed He Himself"* (v. 1); the *"manifestation of Himself"* of the last miracle carries us back to the *"manifestation of His glory"* of the first.—S. John, ii., 11.

ii. Before the Resurrection JESUS was seen by His disciples, after it He manifested Himself to them; *i. e.*, by an act of His Will made Himself visible to them.

iii. It was S. John who first recognized our LORD, S. Peter who first went to Him; S. John, the Apostle of the Eagle Eye, always the first in speculation, S. Peter in action; the Apostle of Love is the first to see, the Apostle of Zeal the first to reach our LORD (v. 7).

Affections.—Realize the glories of the Church Triumphant in contrast to the sufferings of the Church Militant; pray for patience in all trials here; resolve to cultivate both love and zeal.

SATURDAY AFTER TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.

"And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."—I. Kings, xvii., 8-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the widow gathering the two sticks.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to seek and patiently to bear the Cross.

I. Consider the obedience of Elijah:

i. *"Hide thyself by the brook Cherith"* (v. 3). He does not stop to argue that he will probably be starved there, but trustfully and promptly obeys.

ii. *"Get thee to Zarephath."* He does not say that this is a heathen city, and therefore not a safe place for him.

iii. *"Go shew thyself unto Ahab."* (I. Kings, xviii., 1.) He does not complain that that is certain death, but, like his great Antitype, he says by acts, *"My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me."* (S. John, iv., 34.)

II. Consider the words and obedience of the widow:

i. *"Behold, I am gathering two sticks"* (v. 12). The two sticks symbolize the Cross of CHRIST, and she was seeking the two sticks to signify that in the type of Elijah she was receiving CHRIST; she was seeking the Cross, and how soon she was to find it in the loss of her son!

ii. *"I have . . . but an handful of meal . . . that we may eat it, and die."* This cake is a type of the Holy Eucharist, and to how much of this world must we die, if we would feed on that Bread of eternal life, death to the world and self that we may have the true life, which is in CHRIST.

"She went and did according to the saying of Elijah" (v. 15). She obeys, and the bread is multiplied, and sustains them for many days; a type of the Body of CHRIST, Which is eaten daily by the faithful, and yet is never consumed, never decreases. A lesson here, whether in alms or work, always to be ready to help GOD's Church; however much we have to do with our little, let us not grudge GOD His share, and He will bless our store.

III. Consider her trial in the death of her son:

i. *"O thou man of God! Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?"* (v. 18). Others might have murmured, thinking this a hard reward after her deed of charity to Elijah, but this widow blames not GOD but herself, her sin; so GOD in mercy often sends heavy Crosses, which are intended to bring our forgotten sins to remembrance, and to lead us, as it led this woman, to penitence.

ii. Elijah *"stretched himself upon the child three times"* (v. 21). This act is a type of the Incarnation, when GOD the SON measured His Divinity, and as it were contracted it to our human nature; and as Elijah tried to impart some of his living warmth to the cold corpse, so when man was cold and dead did CHRIST by His touch impart life and warmth.

iii. *"Three times."* That he might show how difficult it was to raise the dead, how different were his miracles from those of CHRIST; to teach us perseverance in prayer, each time he prayed more fervently if possible; so our LORD in Gethsemane; to show that the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity had their share in the work of revivifying dead humanity.

Affections.—Realize that in seeking the Cross we find CHRIST; pray for an obedient spirit; resolve to do some act of almsgiving.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

"And He saith unto them, Whose is this image, and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's."—S. Matt., xxii., 20-21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD gazing upon the coin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that at the last day He may be able to recognize His image in you.

I. Consider the question asked of our LORD:

i. The Pharisees, the national party, strongly repudiated all foreign rule; the Herodians, the hangers-on of a dynasty created by Cæsar, pretended loyalty to their Roman Masters. These two parties hated one another, but were ready to forget their differences to conspire against CHRIST, whose teaching reproved them both.

ii. The question seemed a dilemma from which there was no escape; for, if our LORD said no, the Herodians would accuse Him to the governor of teaching sedition; if He said yes, the Pharisees would hold Him up to the multitude as favouring their Roman Conquerors, and so not their expected Messias.

iii. Our LORD, after showing that He knew their hypocrisy and malice, answered the question frankly, but based His answer on such grounds as prevented either party using it against Him.

II. Consider our LORD's answer:

i. *"Shew Me the tribute money"*; the money which they brought was a proof of the subjection of the country; they did not scruple to use Cæsar's money, but they would not recognize Cæsar's authority; it was a question of fact, and the current coin of the country answered it, by showing that they were under Cæsar's rule.

ii. The Pharisees were the theocratic party; our LORD would remind them that the nation had wilfully rejected a theocracy, and chosen a monarchy more than 1,000 years before; they had been warned then, and almost ever since had been suffering the consequences of their choice.

iii. The first clause of the sentence is contained in the second; they are to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, because they are to render to God the things that are GOD's; for all power is of GOD, and all lawful government is to be recognized as in some sense representing GOD's power, and to be obeyed, except where it requires what is contrary to the higher law of GOD; a good Christian must therefore be a good citizen, and from a religious point of view, there is a responsibility in political privileges.

III. Consider our LORD's injunction:

i. There is a clear recognition of two lines of duty: to the world and to GOD; but, alas! the first is always encroaching on the second; *e. g.*, a tithe of your money and a seventh of your time is GOD's, but how seldom rendered to Him; and then what you do pretend to give, your prayers, how often thoughts of the world, plans of work, &c., so occupy them, that you are rendering them to Cæsar, not to GOD.

ii. The stamp of the world is clearly marked on its coin; social duties, business claims, &c., there is little doubt about them.

iii. What is clearly stamped with GOD's image, and superscription? yourself; you belong to another kingdom than this world, a coin from the mint of heaven, created in the image of GOD, stamped in Baptism with His superscription, the Cross; do you render yourself to GOD? The priest says in your name in every Eucharist, *"We offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies."* Give the world what belongs to it, what will perish with it, but give yourself to GOD.

Affections.—Make an act of oblation of yourself to GOD; pray that you may seek first the kingdom of GOD; resolve to make some act of reparation for neglected duties to GOD.

MONDAY AFTER TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

OUR CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN.

“For our conversation is in heaven.”—Phil., iii., 20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John gazing through the opened door at the glories of heaven.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have a greater desire for heavenly things.

πολιτευμα, a word occurring only in this place in the New Testament, signifies conversation, citizenship, or country.

I. Consider how S. Paul, from the surroundings of earthly life, teaches us to draw lessons and illustrations of that spiritual life, on which eternity depends :

i. In the Epistle to the Corinthians he draws one of his most striking lessons from the Isthmian Games, celebrated under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel ; and makes them a forcible illustration of some of the laws of spiritual life.—I. Cor., ix., 24-27.

ii. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, written during his first imprisonment at Rome, he makes the armour of the Roman soldier, who guarded him, an illustration of the weapons, offensive and defensive, needed in the Christian's warfare.—Eph., vi., 10-18.

iii. In the Epistle to the Philippians ; he here reminds them of their boasted privilege of being Roman citizens ; for Philippi was Roman colony, enjoying the “*Jus Italicum*” ; and from that lifts their thoughts to their higher privilege as citizens of heaven.

II. Consider the contrast between the two privileges :

i. They were proud of Rome, the mightiest empire of this world, proud of being its citizens ; but how insignificant was this compared to the honour of being citizens of that country above, that kingdom of the world to come, before which all earthly glory should wane, and pass away.

ii. The Roman Empire exercised a mighty sway, but it was only over men's bodies, and worldly goods ; CHRIST's Kingdom rules hearts, and souls, and minds, rules all with the universal sceptre of Love.

iii. The one was temporal, the other eternal ; the one had power over its subjects only for the few years of their life, lost its claim on them when they died, and after a few centuries perished itself ; the sovereignty of JESUS CHRIST is alike for time and eternity ; in His dominion death has no power.

III. Consider some of the responsibilities of this citizenship :

i. We must live and act as citizens of heaven, keeping its laws, guarding our country's honour.

ii. We must realize that this is not our home ; how foolish to spend all our substance in purchasing a great estate in a foreign land, which we are merely passing through on our way to our own dear country above.

iii. We must pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” remembering that it is not only the Kingdom of CHRIST, for the coming of which we pray, but *our* Kingdom, that in which, if we have any part, it will be the royal privilege of reigning with Him.

Affections.—Realize that our interests, our hopes, our thoughts should be even now in heaven ; pray for more love of heaven ; resolve to fulfil some neglected law of that Kingdom.

TUESDAY AFTER TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LIFE OF UNION.

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."—S. John, i., 37-40.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the two disciples abiding with JESUS.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have grace to follow and to dwell with Him.

I. Consider the three stages of the spiritual life through which the two disciples of S. John passed:

- i. The Purgative way; as they first repented, confessing their sins on the banks of the Jordan.
- ii. The Illuminative way; as they gazed upon the LAMB of GOD, to Whom their Master pointed them.
- iii. The Unitive way, as they followed, found, and abode with JESUS.

II. Consider the object of their search:

- i. It was not curiosity to know where JESUS dwelt, but the longing to dwell with Him, which led them to follow Him.
- ii. The number two in the Bible always signifies imperfection; they find their completion in the third, the companionship of JESUS; without Him we are always weak and incomplete, with Him we can do all things.
- iii. *"They abode with Him all that day"*; we are not to visit Him merely that we may lay down the burden of our sins at His Feet, and then go back to the world, but that we may abide with Him, for *"the night cometh, when no man can work"* (S. John, ix., 4), that night when we hope to sleep in Him.

III. Consider that whatever be our work all our strength must come from abiding with Him:

i. S. Andrew, the first missionary, here teaches us that this must be the strength of all missionary work in the Church, not the going out from JESUS to win souls to Him, and to return laden with the spoils of our conquests, but, abiding in Him, to go out with Him, and so to bring Him to those to whom we go.

ii. S. John, the saint of contemplation, here teaches us that we are not in the power of natural intellect to speculate on divine truth, but abiding in CHRIST through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT to be caught up into heaven.

iii. The means by which this Union is to grow more intimate is the Holy Eucharist; there He dwells, there we come that with the eye of faith we may see, with the heart of faith receive, and abide with Him; for *"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him."* (S. John, vi., 56.)

Affections.—Realize your need of CHRIST's abiding Presence; pray that you may rightly seek Him in the Holy Communion; resolve to watch after your Communion lest you should depart from Him.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LIFE OF JOY.

"This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase but I must decrease."—S. John, iii, 29-30.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John Baptist joyfully receiving the news which told him of the waning of his own life and work in the presence of a brighter light.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for humility.

I. Consider the immediate cause of S. John's joy, the accomplishment of his work :

i. It was the news that the people, leaving him, were flocking to our LORD.

ii. It was the conviction that his work was done, his day over, his efforts crowned with success ; for his office had been to prepare souls for CHRIST ; but for him it also meant loss of popularity, loss of liberty, loss of friends, loss of all, loss of life !

iii. How perfectly he realizes and describes his true relation to our LORD, and to his own followers ; they represent the Bride, they are not his, for he is but the Friend of the Bridegroom ; his joy is fulfilled in knowing that they are safe in the Bridegroom's care.

II. Consider the fundamental cause of S. John's joy, Humility :

i. *"Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose"* (S. John, i, 27) ; this is the key to S. John's character ; he is humble because he is true, and all pride has its vein of untruth. Humility gives freedom from jealousy, and enables us to rejoice in another's success, even where it means our own failure.

ii. *"He must increase"* ; this does not mean that our LORD can increase, for He is ever the same, but that He increases His manifestation of Himself to the world, and in the hearts of men, and this was S. John's joy.

iii. *"I must decrease"* ; as the souls which are led to CHRIST by His Ministers grow in spiritual life, they come to see *"Jesus only"* (S. Matt., xvii., 8), and, without forgetting those to whom under God they owe a deep debt of gratitude, they come to see them in their true relation to CHRIST, and their light, which had seemed so bright, begins indeed to pale before His,—not so much that they decrease, as that exaggerated views of them are corrected. The seasons of the year remind us of this law of spiritual life ; for from the birthday of CHRIST the days begin to increase in length, while from that of S. John they begin to decrease.

III. Consider that the life of humility is the only true life of Joy :

i. Humility must be the preparation for all real growth ; for it is the recognition of our true relation both to God, and to our fellow man.

ii. Humility is therefore religious reality, for it is only in proportion as we decrease, *i. e.*, are emptied of self, that we can be filled with CHRIST, that He can increase in us.

iii. Humility is an ocean of perpetual calm and joy, over which the storms of the world pass without being able to disturb it.

Affections.—Realize how many of the sorrows of life come from pride ; pray to be delivered from the spirit of envy or jealousy ; resolve to watch for opportunities of practising humility.

THURSDAY AFTER TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EUCARISTIC THANKSGIVING.

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."—II. Cor., ix., 15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Blessed Virgin Mary singing the Magnificat.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a grateful heart.

There is no time when thanksgiving is more necessary and efficacious than after our Communion, when our **LORD** is present in our hearts.

I. Consider for what we have to give thanks :

i. For all the positive blessings of our life, both spiritual and physical, since our last Communion.

ii. For all the negative blessings, evils both material and spiritual from which we have been protected, or delivered.

iii. Above all, for the Gift we have just received, **GOD** Himself, the Supreme Treasure of our soul; that we have been permitted once more to feed on Him, that He has renewed our strength with this further Gift of grace.

II. Consider why we should give thanks :

i. The example of the material world receiving and giving in continuous cycle, the witness of the moral world of man's own heart that ingratitude is detestable, both teach this duty.

ii. The miracle of the healing of the Ten Lepers reveals our **LORD**'s desire for thanksgiving, and that He waits for it to give further blessings, and so warns us against its neglect.

iii. Because the disregard of thanksgiving is the great hindrance to spiritual growth, and often the cause of our Communions helping us so little. By an earnest effort we prepare for our Communion, by a careless thanksgiving too often we forfeit the fruits of it.

III. Consider how we should make our Eucharistic thanksgivings :

i. By saying carefully the proper Office of thanksgiving before leaving the church, and in doing so remembering that Satan is on the watch if possible to spoil the effects of our Communion, and will probably tempt us with weariness, or distractions.

ii. If possible by making a Eucharistic Meditation, at least by many little acts of thanksgiving and ejaculations during the day.

iii. In our life by using the grace of that Communion; for a holy life is the best thanksgiving; and by some act of almsgiving.

Affections.—Realize the greatness of the gift you receive in each Communion, no less than **GOD** Himself; pray for grace to use it well; resolve on some special act of thanksgiving.

FRIDAY AFTER TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LIFE OF WITNESS.

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."—S. Matt., xi., 2-6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD receiving the messengers of S. John.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may always witness to CHRIST.

The motive of the question. Some clinging to S. John with almost passionate jealousy, needed to be convinced of our LORD's Messiahship. S. John saw that mere teaching was not sufficient for these, and desired that before his death there might be that conviction in their minds which could only come from personal experience of CHRIST, and so sent them to ask the question themselves.

I. Consider this question as the cry of humanity in all ages:

i. As each system of philosophy or religion has arisen, as each great teacher has appeared, this has been the cry with which he has been met, *"Art Thou He that should come?"* It was especially the cry in our LORD's day, for even profane history tells us that all the world looked for a Deliverer.

ii. It is the question of questions to-day; not only the question of the world, but at one time or other in life probably the question of every heart, asked not so much in doubt as in an agony of fear or hope.

iii. What is the answer? Our LORD shows how it is to be met, how answered. He points to His Works as the answer. Christianity is to be judged by its results; *"By their fruits ye shall know them."* (S. Matt., vii., 20.) *"Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see."*

II. Consider the fruits of Christianity as foretold by our LORD's answer:

i. *"The blind receive their sight."* At the Incarnation man had just realized his blindness, that Paganism was untrue, that which he thought light was darkness; now a chorus of saints proclaim, *"Whereas I was blind, now I see"* (S. John, ix., 25), that light sufficient has been given them to guide them through the dark night of this world.

ii. *"The lame walk."* Mankind was indeed lame, halting amid a variety of opinions, and without any goal; it had just realized this, for the two great schools, the Stoics and Epicureans, had agreed in this, that there was no end to live for; now Christianity points to a grand procession of its soldiers marching with no uncertain tread to the Gates of Heaven.

iii. *"The lepers are cleansed";* mankind was indeed leprous with sin; there was no such thing as pure family life, read Rom., i., or Juvenal, or the pages of Gibbon; now, while there is much still of evil, there is much that is beautiful; to Christianity we owe our Homes.

iv. *"The deaf hear."* Mankind had cried, like the priests of Baal on Carmel, cried all day, but had heard no reply.—I. Kings, xviii., 26. Now multitudes witness that they heard a Voice say, *"Follow Me"* (S. Matt., iv., 19), and that they arose and followed.

v. *"The dead are raised."* Mankind was dead in trespasses and sins when JESUS came, and by the power of His Voice awakened the dead, and then said to His Church, *"Loose him and let him go"* (S. John, xi., 44), and ever since then the Church has been loosing the grave clothes of those sinners whom the Voice of JESUS has quickened into life.

vi. *"The poor have the gospel preached to them."* Before the Incarnation the poor were utterly disregarded; there was not a Charitable Institution in the world; now Christianity has created the virtues of Charity and Humility; some of the largest buildings in every city are the witness to what Christianity has done.

II. Consider the individual responsibility of Christians:

i. While history is the evidence of the truth of Christianity, the mass knows little of history, and cares not to read it; therefore *you* must be the evidence yourself, you must witness of what Christianity has done in you.

ii. Some you know not by name, as well as some most dear to you, may be asking with terrible earnestness this question, and looking to your life for the answer.

Affections.—Realize the responsibility of being a follower of CHRIST; pray that no soul may be injured by your religious inconsistencies; resolve to be more careful about the example you set.

SATURDAY AFTER TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE JUDGMENT OF BELSHAZZAR.

"Tekel; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."—Dan., v., 27.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Belshazzar and his astonished courtiers gazing in terror at the mysterious writing on the wall.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so judge yourself that you may not be judged of the LORD.

I. Consider Belshazzar's history :

i. The city was surrounded by the foe, but trusting to its strength Belshazzar with his court kept revel, and used the vessels of the Temple at Jerusalem at the feast, and gave glory to the false gods.

ii. In the midst of the mirth a mysterious hand was seen tracing certain characters on the wall. Belshazzar in alarm sent first for his own magicians, and at last for Daniel.

iii. Daniel interpreted the writing, and pronounced the king's doom ; and why ? God's vengeance was denounced against a heathen king for not having honoured Him, and Daniel declares the reason ; because with the striking example of Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, with abundance of light, He had still neglected to serve the true God.

II. Consider how this history applies to us :

i. We know that all around us the hosts of our foes are encamped, and how do we spend our time ? as though we realized our danger ? that we were in an enemy's country ? alas, how often in living only for the present, in the feasting and excitement of this world, using those vessels belonging to the City of God, the New Jerusalem, our souls and bodies, as though they belonged only to this world.

ii. Is there not for us handwriting on the walls of our life ? the Hand of God laid in judgment on others, this one cut off in the midst of worldliness, that one in a life of sin ; each of the many visitations tracing, if we have eyes to see it, the warning word, Tekel.

iii. Like Belshazzar we cannot plead ignorance, we recognize the judgments of God on others, we know His laws, but do we keep them ?

III. Consider the duty of judging ourselves :

i. What are we putting into the balances of God's justice, what are we trusting to ? wearing the garb, using the phraseology of a religion, whose spirit we ignore ?

ii. Are we trusting to an amiable disposition, a moral life ? then for us the word Tekel is written, "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*"

iii. Let us examine how we stand now ; how much of our religious life is real ! how much of our work for God is from the right motive ! the judgment at the last will be unerring ; let us anticipate it at the tribunal of mercy in sincere penitence.

Affections.—Realize the strictness of the judgment of God ; pray for a merciful judgment ; resolve to apply God's warnings to yourself.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF OUR LORD'S REDEEMING WORK.

"While He spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose and followed him."—S. Matt., ix., 18-19.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD cheerfully leaving His work of preaching to minister to the needs of an individual.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a greater realization of the individual character of our LORD's dealings with you.

I. Consider some of the events of the day:

i. In the early morning our LORD had healed the demoniac at Gadara.—S. Mark, v., 1-21.

ii. JESUS was engaged in teaching the disciples of John when Jairus came to call Him to his daughter; He left the multitude to minister to one little child.

iii. On His way to the house of Jairus our LORD stops to cure one poor woman, who from the nature of her disease was an object of contempt to others.

II. Consider of the diseases of the body, which JESUS healed:

i. That they are types of corresponding diseases of the soul to which we are subject. What is our own moral ailment?

ii. That our LORD's purpose in healing them was more than to give physical relief; it was to reach, and heal the soul.

iii. That they are in strictest analogy with the diseases of the soul; so that the steps by which the Good Physician proceeded to their cure are typical of those spiritual laws by which our souls may be healed.

III. Consider some lessons of to-day's Gospel:

i. To bring all our needs to CHRIST; nothing too great, nothing too small for His loving Heart to sympathize in, for His gracious power to relieve.

ii. To realize that we must be dealt with by our LORD as individuals; none too young, none too poor to be the object of His love and pity. This is the Church's system, because it is her LORD's teaching, that He heals and helps individuals, not masses.

iii. To recognize the healing power of our LORD's touch; we may touch Him now, as the woman did; she touched Him through the hem of His garment, we touch Him through the Sacraments, and His touch has lost none of its saving power.

Affections.—Realize our LORD's love for, and interest in your soul; pray that you may approach to touch Him more worthily in the Sacraments; resolve to make your next Communion with the special intention of obtaining grace to fight against your besetting sin.

MONDAY AFTER TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.

"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole."—S. Matt., ix., 20-21.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the woman kneeling at our LORD's Feet, and telling Him all the truth.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage and sincerity.

S. Matthew's account of this miracle is supplemented by the more detailed narratives of SS. Mark and Luke.

I. Consider the disease as a type of sin :

i. It drained away the strength of her body ; so the ever-flowing fountain of sin drains away the life blood of the soul.
ii. It was incurable by human skill ; she had spent her all on the world's physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse ; so the world has its treatment, which it recommends for sin, which generally results in the same way.

iii. It is healed instantly by the touch of CHRIST.

II. Consider the conduct of the woman :

i. *"If I may but touch His garment, I shall be made whole"* ; she made an act of faith ; faith is the connecting link between our LORD's Incarnation and our needs.

ii. She acted on her faith ; she touched the hem of His garment ; a barren faith is useless, faith without sacraments is insufficient ; she was not healed when she believed, but when she touched ; others touched without faith and received no benefit ; so we touch our LORD with faith in each good Communion.

iii. She made her Communion with our LORD with a special purpose, and she obtained what she sought, the healing of her body, relief for her immediate need.

III. Consider our LORD's dealings with this woman :

i. From a shame which was natural, but untimely at this crisis of her spiritual life, she wished to withdraw amidst the crowd ; how often from the same cause we go with half a blessing, a Communion, which is a help, because we made it, realizing our own misery, and with faith, but not all it might be.

ii. Our LORD's work is not only to help, but to cure both body and soul ; in mercy He draws her to His Feet, and at last *"the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth."* (S. Mark, v., 33.) She confesses her misery.

iii. *Daughter, thy faith hath made the whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."* (S. Mark, v., 34.) On her confession He gives her Absolution, *"go in peace"* (lit., into peace) ; not only the bodily, but the spiritual cure is accomplished.

Affections.—Realize the misery of sin ; pray that you may shrink from no humiliation which may lead to the healing of your soul ; resolve to be thoroughly sincere in religious matters, to tell all the truth.

TUESDAY AFTER TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

JAIRUS AND HIS DAUGHTER.

"While He spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, saying, my daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live."—S. Matt. ix., 18.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD standing by the child in the chamber of death.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to flee to Jesus for aid in every danger.

As the death of the body is the result of sin, so is it the type of the effect of sin on the soul.

I. Consider the faith of Jairus:

i. It was so strong that it enabled him to tear himself from his child when she was at the point of death, and to say, *"lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live."*

ii. At the moment of its severest trial, when the message reached him, *"Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master"* (S. Luke viii., 49), our LORD sustains it by His words of encouragement, *"Fear not; believe only."*

iii. Our LORD rewards it by raising his daughter from the dead.

II. Consider the example of this duty of a father to a sinning child:

i. How early sin attacks, and, if yielded to, slays the soul; she was but twelve; parents should realize this, and not in foolish fondness imagine their children safe from the ravages of sin.

ii. When her father realized that the disease was mortal, he went to seek the spiritual aid of JESUS and His disciples; so should every parent, whose child seems to have yielded to mortal sin, at once seek the aid of the representatives of CHRIST in His Church.

iii. Around her, as she lay dead, were the parents believing, hoping, praying, and JESUS and the three representatives of His Church. The intercessions of the natural, and the sacramental help of the spiritual relations of the child are the means of her restoration to life.

III. Consider the contrast between the world's method of dealing with death and our LORD's:

i. *"When Jesus . . . saw the minstrels and the people making a noise"* (v., 23); the world by its noise and excitement tries to hide the evil of death.

ii. JESUS puts them all forth, and in the calm, still chamber, death is realized, and conquered; so the world tries to hide the results of sin in the soul, and in quiet calmness we must realize our state before we can call JESUS to our aid.

iii. *"And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi."* (S. Mark, v., 41.) His voice calls back the soul; His touch gives power to arise.

Affections.—Realize the folly of the world's method of hiding the evil of sin instead of trying to cure it; pray that the touch of JESUS in your communions may give you power to rise more and more from this dying world towards that eternal life which is in Him; resolve to put aside the claims of the world, and, on some definite occasion, in the quietness of your own chamber, to consider the state of your soul.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

EPHESUS.

"Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;" &c.—Rev., ii., 1-8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD, holding in His Hand the seven stars, and moving in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to see Him in His priests in all their ministrations, and to realize His presence in your daily life.

The Church of Ephesus enjoyed unusual advantages, S. Paul its founder, S. Timothy its Bishop, S. John its example, love!! Think of your advantages—an Apostolic Church, a ministry which has been instructed in the Catholic faith.

I. Consider the Title of our LORD:

i. Holding the stars; *i. e.*, the ministries of the Church; in every sacrament He is the Priest. Have you realized this in your Confessions and Comunions?

(a.) Individually; the stars are to give light by night, to guide the mariner across the pathless sea; how does your light shine before men? where are you leading those over whom you have influence? Will any shipwreck be due to you? The night is indeed dark!!

(b.) Realize your dependence on our LORD; angels shall hold thee up, nay, more, JESUS holds the stars in His Hand; He can raise them to their places in heaven, or cast them down, "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*" (S. Luke, x., 18) Fear lest through your sin this should be your end.

ii. Walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; rightly candlesticks, or lamps (*λυχνιῶν*), for JESUS is the Candle or Light.

(a.) CHRIST'S Presence in His Churches, walking amidst them, is the source of confidence, and yet of sorrow; for we forget this.

(b.) His companionship of your own life; you are the lamp in which He is placed as the light, hence penitence (cleansing of the lamp), and prayer (feeding it with oil).

II. Consider the message, "*I know thy works*," &c.:

i. *Praise*; labour, patience, hatred of evil, "*Mine eyes gush out with water; because men keep not Thy law.*" (Ps., cxix., 136); careful investigation of the truth, labour for CHRIST, patience in resisting, bearing—not with the world by going with it, "*and hast not fainted*" (v. 3), the thought of the end; "*faint, yet pursuing.*"

ii. *Blame*; "*Nevertheless I have (not 'somewhat') against thee that thou hast left thy first love*" (v. 4). Thy first love! oh, think of its sweetness and fervour, and compare it with thy present love.

iii. "*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works*" (v. 5), not the first feelings, like the bloom on the peach, they cannot be recovered, but that is thy loss in the present only.

iv. "*Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent*" (v. 5); or else the removal of the candlestick, the extinction of the light, "*Our lamps are going out*" (S. Matt., xxv., 8), the fall of the star (meteors falling), the possibility of fall even for S. Timothy!

III. Consider the Reward, "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God*" (v. 7):

i. To him that overcometh now the daily temptation, the special sin—the Holy Eucharist, He Who is the principle of life; Paradise, the Company of heaven around the altar.

ii. *Hereafter*; the whole victory—Heaven, the perfect fruition of the Beatific Vision, to drink in the life of GOD.

Affections.—Make acts of love and fear; pray for forgiveness of the past; examine as to your love, and resolve to watch.

THURSDAY AFTER TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE WIDOW'S MITES.

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And He called unto Him His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."—S. Mark, xii., 41-44.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the poor widow casting her two mites into the treasury.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your offerings may be accepted of GOD.

I. Consider how our LORD now sits over against the treasury:

i. The treasury of JESUS and the soul is the Holy Eucharist, there He ever sits; *"where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* (S. Matt., vi., 21.) Is your heart there? then it is indeed the treasury of your soul.

ii. In the Holy Eucharist JESUS receives what each gives, and estimates the gift by the capacity and motive of the giver.

iii. In the Holy Communion JESUS gives in return Himself.

II. Consider what our LORD sees:

i. He sees each approach His Altar, and He knows each thoroughly.

ii. The rich of their abundance cast in much; we may either take this of alms offered at the Eucharist, or as interest in religion; if the latter, how many interests they have in this life! and religion perhaps only one out of many! how much time they have on their hands! the time given to GOD not valuable to them.

iii. The poor of their want; if we take it of alms, what real self-denial it means with the poor! going without something in order to give; if of interest, the one interest of their life; if of time, time given after a hard day's work, or time taken from other things.

III. Consider the widow's gift:

i. She was a widow, and poor, representing the faithful soul; a widow in that her Bridegroom JESUS has ascended into heaven; poor in that she realizes her own nothingness, and so fulfils the first Beatitude, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (S. Matt., v., 3.) She gave her all, for she gave herself, two mites.

ii. Her Body; consecrated to JESUS by the poverty of self-denial, given to be His Temple.

iii. Her Soul; cleansed and adorned by penitence, every faculty offered to Him.

Affections.—Realize the poverty of your best offerings to GOD; pray for greater consecration of self to God's service; resolve to make some special offering at your next Communion.

FRIDAY AFTER TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SMYRNA.

"And unto the Angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, Which was dead, and is alive;" &c.—Rev. ii., 8, &c.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD JESUS CHRIST as the First and the Last, our All, Who was dead and is alive, the Pledge of our eternal life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace in all things to look to Him, and so to die to the world now, that you may live in Him now and for evermore.

The privileges of Smyrna were not as great as those of Ephesus, and yet it had the faithful Polycarp as Bishop; he may have been the angel addressed in this Epistle, as the dates will allow for it, and this Epistle and that to Philadelphia are the only ones without blame.

I. Consider the Title of our LORD :

i. As GOD, "*the First and the Last*"; the first cause and the final cause; do we accept all as from Him, do we do all for Him, is He indeed our All?

ii. As man, "*Which was dead, and is alive*"; we too were dead, and He raised us from the dead; in what state are we now? Again we are to die to the world that we may live with Him, "*for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.*" (II. Tim., ii., 11).

II. Consider the message, "*I know Thy works*," &c.:

i. Tribulation; poverty, but thou art rich; "*blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God*" (S. Luke, vi., 20); the blasphemy (the Jews were especially eager in S. Polycarp's martyrdom); *e. g.*, misunderstanding and misrepresentation from those who call themselves churchmen; also from the mistaken kindness of friends; having our motives misjudged, and what we hold most dear and sacred ridiculed.

ii. "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*" (v. 10); courage, and especially in resisting the devil; he is to be recognized as the cause of all tribulation; the end of suffering is trial, that of trial is perfection.—S. James, i., 2-5.

iii. "*Ten days*"; a definite time before decided, not left to Satan, but limited, as in Job's case.

iv. "*Be thou faithful unto death*"; there is no reward except for final perseverance; this grace we must pray for daily; "*what wouldest thou do, if thou knewest thou wouldest persevere; that do, and thou shalt persevere.*"

v. "*And I will give thee a crown of life*"; made of the gold of our temptations, set with the jewels of our virtues; eternal life; Satan may kill the body, but that only helps us forward to eternal life.

III. Consider the reward: "*He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*" (v. 11); he that overcometh, *i. e.*, these tribulations and temptations shall not be hurt by the second death, the death of body and soul in hell; the reward, and indeed the whole Epistle, has a special meaning when we consider it as addressed to S. Polycarp.

Affections.—Courage, which comes from perfect trust in GOD; love, that fear may be cast out; pray for final perseverance; resolve to welcome your own special cross.

SATURDAY AFTER TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PERGAMUM.

"And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write; These things saith He Which hath the sharp sword with two edges;" &c.—Rev., ii., 12, &c.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD with the two-edged sword going forth to conquer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace, so to examine our consciences and to put away our sins, that we may not fear that sword which is so piercing.

Pergamum was especially noted for its idol-worship. Æsculapius was its god; his emblem was a serpent; the Bishop is unknown. In common with Ephesus and Thyatira, this Epistle has a message of mingled praise and blame.

I. Consider the Title of our LORD, “*He Which hath the sharp sword with two edges*”:

i. The severity of our LORD’s judgment, taking account of thoughts and intentions, as well as words and deeds.

ii. The sword which inflicts the second death.

II. Consider the message, “*I know thy works*,” &c. :

i. “*Where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is*” (v. 13). Words of encouragement; our LORD knows our difficulties. Whose throne is set up in your heart?

ii. *Praise*; “*Thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith*”; and what a name of strength is that! “*We are called by Thy Name; leave us not.*” (Jer., xiv., 9.) And yet what a disappointing conclusion, only not to have denied the faith; so “*having done all, to stand.*” (Eph., vi., 13.)

iii. Even in the face of persecution unto death; the name of the martyr Antipas may mean “one who stands alone against all.”

iv. *Blame*; “*But I have a few things against thee*” (v. 14); the doctrine of Balaam, the seduction of GOD’s people by sensual pleasures to join in heathen rites.—Numb., xxxi., 16. How often have the pleasures of the world, or the love of others, led you away from GOD, so come between you and GOD, as to become objects of idolatry; the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was similar.

v. “*Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My Mouth*” (v. 16). No time to be lost, not next Lent, but now! What a repentance! how searching with that sword suspended over our heads! (Balaam and the angel’s sword.)

III. Consider the Reward, “*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*” (v. 17):

i. The hidden manna; the Holy Eucharist as opposed to the idol-feast; hidden, because under the veils of bread and wine the Bread of Life is given. Manna, “*able to content every man’s delight, and agreeing to every taste*” (Wis., xvi., 20); so the Holy Eucharist is different to all, yet meeting each one’s needs, satisfying each one’s desires.

ii. The white stone; probably the diamond (*λευκὴν* includes the idea of sparkling); a reference to the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of the High Priest; the words signify Light and Perfection, and tradition says it was a stone on which the incommunicable Name of JEHOVAH was engraved. Urim and Thummim was probably a peerless diamond engraved with JEHOVAH’S Name, and this is the great promise to him that overcometh, that he shall be in the highest sense a Priest in the heavenly Temple, where is the Beatific Vision; and the “*Name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*,” signifies a special revelation of GOD to each individually.

Affections.—Desire for communion with GOD; pray for grace to hold fast that Name now, that it may be our reward then; resolve to do some special act of penitence.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FRAGMENTS.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—S. John, vi., 12

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles diligently filling their baskets.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for diligence in preparing to cross the threshold of another year of grace.

In its position in the Gospel for to-day this text seems intended by the Church to direct our attention to the few remaining days of this Christian year.

I. Consider this text of the Christian year :

i. There is but a fragment left, one short week ; we are warned against the temptation to let that go with the rest, to put off any great effort to do better till next Sunday, when we begin again the Church's year ; there is much to be done this week.

ii. We should look back, and examine how the resolutions of last Advent have been kept ; how the calls of GOD during the past year have been obeyed ; how the opportunities given us have been seized ; how the means of grace have been used ; we should gather together the year's experiences for our encouragement or warning in the future.

iii. We should look forward, and with many prayers make our resolutions for the new year of grace.

II. Consider this text of our life :

i. There is but a fragment left ; how solemn is the ending of each year ! how joyful for those who can say, *"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"* ! (Rom., xiii., 11.)

ii. Look back ; trace with gratitude the golden thread of GOD's loving Providence running through it ; the many assaults, perhaps the many victories of temptation ; the gradual formation of your character.

iii. Look forward ; but a fragment left ! how best can you use it ? what is there that still remains to be done ? what is there which must be, as far as possible, undone ?

III. Consider the reason given—*"that nothing be lost"* :

i. This surely tells us that GOD gives nothing to be wasted ; no day without its work ; no trial or temptation without its purpose ; no faculty or gift to be left unimproved,

ii. How much has been lost already ! can we afford to go on wasting life, to lose any more ?

iii. Every fragment of that bread, on which the benediction of CHRIST had rested, belonged to another world, was carried reverently by the Apostles across the sea, in spite of the storm, to the shore beyond ; so with life, every act, upon which the blessing of CHRIST rests, has its living result in eternity. *"That they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."* (Rev., xiv., 13.) *"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus."* (Col., iii., 17.) Yes, that it may live on in its result to your great reward in His Kingdom in heaven.

Affections.—Realize the eternal value of each opportunity ; pray that you may, day by day, lay up treasure in heaven ; resolve to do something to-day for our LORD.

MONDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world."—S. John, vi., 14.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD giving thanks for the food.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a spirit of thanksgiving for God's daily gifts to you.

I. Consider some of the types of this miracle :

i. The manna with which Moses fed the people in the wilderness. This led them to say, *"This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world,"* for Moses had foretold, *"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet....like unto me."* (Deut., xviii., 15.)

ii. The barrel of meal, and the cruse of oil of the widow of Zarephath, which were multiplied at the word of Elijah.—I. Kings, xvii., 8-17.

iii. The twenty loaves of barley, which Elisha commanded his servitor to set before an hundred men.—II. Kings, iv., 42-44.

II. Consider :

i. The diligent fervour of the people, which led them to leave their homes to seek our LORD, and to remain with Him so long, seeking the food of the soul in preference to that of the body.

ii. That they sought first the Kingdom of GOD, according to our LORD's commands, and He added all that they needed for their bodies, according to His promise —S. Matt., vi., 33.

iii. That JESUS gave thanks to teach us that every meal is a testimony to our dependence on GOD, and calls for our gratitude. Are we careful and earnest in saying grace at our meals?

III. Consider further :

i. Our LORD uses means, the five loaves and two fishes, which He blesses ; so in the Sacraments He uses an outward visible sign, which by His benediction becomes the channel of His gift of grace.

ii. Our LORD uses agents to dispense His gifts, *"He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down"* (v. 11); so now in the ministry of His Church, through whom He bestows the Sacraments of grace.

iii. Stupendous as the miracle was, it has its analogy in the daily feeding of the world by the grains of corn, sown in the field, and by God's blessing multiplied to supply the needs of His creatures.

Affections.—Make acts of love and thanksgiving; pray for a more trusting spirit in times of difficulty ; resolve to recognize God's gifts in the daily necessities of life.

TUESDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THYATIRA.

“And unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira write ; These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His Eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His Feet are like fine brass ;” &c.—Rev., ii., 18, &c.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD with His Eyes like a flame of fire piercing all things, and His Feet like fine brass.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for sincerity and purity.

Thyatira was the City of Lydia—Acts, xvi., 14; its Bishop is not known; Jezebel seems to have been the Bishop's wife (for the best reading is *την γυναῖκα σού*).

I. Consider the Title of our LORD : Eyes like unto a flame of fire, Feet like molten brass, the special emblems of the Incarnation :

i. The Eyes of the GODHEAD ; “*I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts*” (v. 23) ; “*I will search Jerusalem with candles*” (Zeph., i., 12) ; am I always sincere in my Confessions, making them as in anticipation of the last Judgment ?

ii. The Feet of His Humanity ; that which rests on the earth, and yet how pure, like molten brass ; if the first tells of the sincerity I need in all my dealings with GOD, surely this speaks of the purity.

II. Consider the message : “*I know Thy works*,” &c. :

i. “*Praise*” ; charity, service and faith, patience and works, and the last to be more than the first ; in this a contrast to Ephesus.

ii. “*Blame*” ; “*Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel*” (v. 20) (thy wife Jezebel) ; it was sufferance, not active participation ; if she was indeed the Bishop's wife, what a lesson of the danger of allowing any, however near or dear, to interfere with our duty to GOD ; to lead us into heresy or lukewarmness.

iii. “*I gave her space to repent*” (v. 21) ; the long suffering of GOD, and I,—have I repented ? there is a limit ; “*and I will give unto every one of you according to your works*” (v. 23) ; not according to your outward professions.

III. Consider the reward : “*And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the Morning Star*” (vv. 26-29) :

i. “*Keepeth My works to the end*” ; nothing but final perseverance rewarded.

ii. “*Here*” ; to rule the nations, *i. e.*, to overcome the world, the seven nations of Canaan, the seven deadly sins ; *hereafter* to reign with Him.

iii. “*The Morning Star*” ; the herald of the day, JESUS Himself, “*I am the Bright and Morning Star*” (Rev., xxii., 16) ; shining more and more brightly in our hearts until the perfect day ; to encourage us in the darkness of the night by its answer, as we ask, “*Watchman, what of the night ? the morning cometh.*” (Isaiah, xxi., 11-12.)

Affections.—Make acts of love, and contrition ; pray for constancy amid the temptations of your own family circle ; resolve to examine as to the sincerity of your last act of penitence.

WEDNESDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

SARDIS.

"And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write: These things saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;" &c.—Rev., iii., 1-7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD holding the seven Spirits, and the seven Stars, and threatening to withdraw the Spirit, and to let fall the Stars.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for mercy, “*Have patience with me.*”

Sardis, the Bishop unknown, was rich and prosperous as a Church, and yet the antiphon of the Epistle is, “*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*” The peculiarity which this Epistle has, in common with Laodicea, is that there is no mention of praise, nor of temptation, no fears! no troubles! no enemy! Satan was too wise to harass them; that false peace! is it, has it ever been ours?

I. Consider the Title of our LORD :

i. The seven Spirits may be taken of the sevenfold gift of the HOLY GHOST, strengthening all our moral faculties; or of the workings of the HOLY SPIRIT through the seven Sacramental channels of the Church. The gifts may be withdrawn, the Spirit may be quenched, the Sacraments are not charms, they need to be received with right dispositions, or the Sacrament may be received, but no grace.

ii. The seven stars are the angels of the Churches; we too are to be stars in the firmament; the danger of the hand being withdrawn, and the stars falling! “*wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*” (Jude, 13.)

II. Consider the message; “*I know Thy works,*” &c. :

i. No word of praise; and yet Sardis had a name of life, was looked on as a model Church, but our LORD saw but a whitened sepulchre. How is it with you? You have a name, the very fact of your making this meditation proves it, but what does He Who searches the heart see to be the motive of all.

ii. This Church was even worse than Laodicea in one thing, that it deceived the world; it had a name,—Laodicea thought well of herself, was self-deceived, but Sardis had succeeded in deceiving others.

iii. “*Thou art dead*”; Sardis was a great mausoleum of corpses moving about in hideous mimicry of life.

iv. “*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*” (v. 2); prayer without watchfulness is hypocrisy, as watchfulness without prayer is presumption; revive the fast expiring flame of life.

v. “*For I have not found thy works perfect before God*” ($\pi\varepsilon\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\acute{e}v\alpha$, fulfilled, not perfect); “that will do,” Confessions and Communions put off, prayers said, duties half done; “*they filled them up to the brim*” (S. John, ii., 7); how soon this eats the life out of the body of a work, and leaves it a corpse; “*before (My) God*” perfect perhaps before others.

vi. “*Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent*” (v. 3); how through the Sacraments thou hast received the gifts of life; in thine own conscience, in the Bible, and in the Church, thou hast heard the words of life; “*hold fast what is left*”; oh! if you do not stop now, you will indeed die,—“*and repent,*” “*was dead, and is alive again.*” (S. Luke, xv., 32.)

vii. “*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis*” (v. 4); how dear the thought, our LORD will not forget the few among the many, even in Sardis. Are we of the few, in the world but not of the world, in the narrow way? if so, in spite of all the wickedness around, to walk with CHRIST now and for ever!

III. Consider the Reward; “*he that overcometh,*” &c. (v. 5) :

i. White raiment; because washed in the Blood of the Lamb.—Rev., vii., 14.

ii. Name unknown in this world, but written in the book of life.

iii. Name confessed before GOD and the angels.—S. Matt., x., 32.

Affections.—Fear; pray for reality; resolve at once to amend.

THURSDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“This is His Name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.”—Jer., xxiii., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the King asking, *“How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment.”* (S. Matt., xxii., 12.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may hunger and thirst after righteousness.

I. Consider Righteousness as the great need of the soul:

i. It is the clothing of the *soul*, which comes into this world, like the body, naked; *e. g.*, *“I put on righteousness, and it clothed me.”* (Job, xxix., 14.)

ii. It is the food of the soul, which comes into this world hungry and thirsty for righteousness.—S. Matt., v., 6.

iii. It is the need of the soul in eternity; *“Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (Heb., xii., 14); the Wedding Garment.

II. Consider what Righteousness is:

i. It is that principle of perfect justice, of moral right, which man lost by the fall.

ii. It is that which belongs only to a moral agent, and is now the joy of the angels, and will be part of our joy in heaven.

iii. It is our **LORD**; for this is His Title, the **LORD** our Righteousness, and all righteousness is in Him.

III. Consider how it is to be obtained:

i. Through the Sacraments; by Baptism we are first incorporated into **CHRIST**, and His righteousness is imparted to us.

ii. It should grow by means of each Communion, for each should knit us closer to our **LORD**.

iii. The Righteousness of **CHRIST** imparted to us through the Sacraments becomes habitual, if we correspond to their grace, becomes the habit of our life, the Wedding Garment of the soul.

Affections.—Realize that all Holiness is in **CHRIST**; pray for more faithful correspondence to grace; resolve in your next Communion especially to seek this gift.

FRIDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PHILADELPHIA.

"And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia write: These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the Key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth;" &c.—Rev., iii., 7-14.

PRELUDE.—Contemplate our LORD bearing His Cross up Calvary, that Key of David by which He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace so patiently to bear your cross that when you reach heaven's gate you may be found to have the Key which alone can open it.

The Bishop of Philadelphia is unknown; except Smyrna it is the only Church with no word of blame, and like Smyrna a persecuted Church.

I. Consider the Title of our LORD; the three essentials of sanctity:

i. *"He that is Holy"*; this is one essential of every Saint, *"Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord"* (Heb., xii., 14), the Holiness of CHRIST imparted through the sacraments.

ii. *"He that is True"*; the next essential is Truth, a right faith; a good life is not sufficient without this, morality without religion will not save us.

iii. *"He that hath the Key of David"*; the Cross, the Key which will unlock all the gates of difficulty, the Cross, the third essential for the saint.

II. Consider the message, *"I know thy works," &c.:*

i. No word of blame, but a privilege; the open door, which no man can shut; that door never has been shut; of the seven, Philadelphia alone exists as a Church, if we except a few in Ephesus.

ii. *"Thou hast a little strength"* (v. 8); the "a" should be omitted; for the point is that this Church though weak should be gloriously kept in the hour of temptation; the lesson is that, because we are weak, He will strengthen us, Who said, *"My strength is made perfect in weakness"* (II. Cor., xii., 9), and that we are to *"go from strength to strength."* (Ps., lxxxiv., 7.)

iii. *"I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee"* (v. 9); those who say they are Jews and are not; so if we are faithful will it be with our opponents in the Church; the promise that they shall be converted, and know that GOD has loved us.

iv. *"My patience"* (v. 10); my patience carries us back to the Passion. My patience; for no mere patience of our own would be sufficient.

v. *"I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation," &c. (v. 10), "from"* (ἐν), either by immunity from that especial temptation, or by being brought safely through it.

vi. *"Behold, I come quickly"* (v. 11); but a little time for works of love, but a little time for suffering.

III. Consider the Reward; *"Him that overcometh"*; in this Epistle the overcoming opposition, and misrepresentation:

i. *"A pillar in the temple of My God"* (v. 12); the idea of permanence as opposed to the daily danger of letting go the crown; also a place of honour in that great city, not merely in the walls, as other precious stones, but a pillar.

ii. *"I will write upon him the Name of My God"*; a reference to the two great pillars of the temple, and the naming of them; Jachin (He will establish), and Boaz (in Him is strength); *"and the name of the city of My God,"* i. e., the New Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace, the Beatific Vision, of which Jerusalem on earth was the type in name, the contrast in reality.

iii. *"My new Name"*; as on the white stone (Pergamum), only here it is to be on the individual; we have here the idea of our being, by the discipline of life, hewn, polished, and at last engraved by the finger of GOD.

Affections.—Realize your responsibility for opportunities; pray for perseverance under trial; resolve to bear with patience opposition and misrepresentation.

SATURDAY AFTER TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

LAODICEA.

"And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;" &c.—Rev. iii., 14-22.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD as the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of Creation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to refer all things in your life to Him.

Laodicea, with Sardis, is the only Church to which no word of praise is spoken; the great picture of worldliness, lukewarmness, and self-deception; its Bishop is unknown.

I. Consider the Title of our LORD :

i. *"The Amen"*; the Truth and Fidelity of GOD contrasted with the unreal religion of Laodicea.

ii. *"The Faithful and True Witness"*; this calls our thoughts to the scene in the Roman Judgment Hall, where JESUS witnessed to the Truth.

iii. *"The Beginning of the Creation"*; the Initial cause of all things, to Whom all must look for help.

II. Consider the message, *"I know Thy works," &c. :*

i. Neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm; cold, in the case of the Laodiceans, evidently meant unbelief, and hence those words of indignation; it would be more likely for an unbeliever to be converted in those days, than for a lukewarm believer to become zealous; but for us to be lukewarm is to be afraid to give up our devotions, and yet only to say them as a matter of form; afraid to give up religion altogether, and yet to be very worldly.

ii. There are three different opinious as to this character :

(a.) The world's opinion; it is the world's model character, thoroughly respectable, thoroughly admirable in the world's eyes.

(b.) Its own opinion; we have it in our LORD'S words, *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"* (v. 17).

(c.) Our LORD'S opinion; *"THE wretched one (ὁ ταλαῖπωρος), and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"*; our LORD'S hatred of this character comes perhaps from its influence for evil on others.

iii. *"I will spue thee out of My mouth"* (v. 16); lukewarmness was a gradual rejection of the things of CHRIST; the Lukewarm had tasted the sweetness of CHRIST in Word and Sacraments, and was sick of it, and having rejected our LORD, He rejects him.

iv. But a word of loving counsel and warning first; not only a revelation of their danger, but of the means of escape; *"Buy of Me gold"* (v. 18), without money and without price, and yet pointing to the fact that there must be a real effort of our own.

(a.) *"Gold"*; the true riches as opposed to the boasted riches of Laodicea; *"for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* (S. Mark, viii., 36); the gold of love.

(b.) *"White raiment"*; the baptismal robe, the wedding garment, the righteousness of the saints, the nakedness of the soul without this.

(c.) *"Eye-salve"*; the removal of the beam, the scales of sin.—S Luke vi., 42; Acts, ix., 18.

(d.) *"Be zealous, and repent"*; positive and negative remedies for lukewarmness.

(e.) *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock"*; the co-operation of man's will with GOD'S grace, but how much is involved in that opening of the door; an oblation of self; a sacrifice of all to GOD.

III. Consider the Reward: *"To sit with Me in My throne"*; to reign with CHRIST for ever, a fitting end of these glorious promises.

Affections.—Realize the danger of self-deception; pray for zeal; resolve to do some act for GOD'S glory, which will cost you an effort.

THE NATIVITY OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

THE GREATNESS OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

"For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord."—S. Luke, i., 15.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the angel appearing to Zacharias.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may follow the example of S. John's humility.

To-day is the birthday of the greatest among men according to the testimony of our LORD; many are great in their own eyes, some in the eyes of their friends, fewer in the eyes of the world, fewer still in the Eyes of GOD; S. John was one of these.

I. Consider in what S. John's greatness consisted :

i. He was great in his birth ; it was announced by an angel, miraculous in itself, and attended by miracles; *e. g.*, his father's dumbness, his own recognition of our LORD before his birth.

ii. He was great in his life ; he attracted the attention, and commanded the respect of the world, *"For all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed;"* (S. Mark, xi., 32); his too was a life of consistent witnessing to one object, CHRIST.

iii. He was great in his death ; it was a martyrdom, and our LORD was a witness to his faithfulness.—S. Matt., xi., 9-12.

II. Consider the cause of S. John's greatness, Humility :

i. It was not only that he thought humbly of himself, but that he was so absorbed in his work for GOD that he forgot he had a self, and spoke of himself only as a Voice.—S. John, i., 23.

ii. It led him to disclaim being thought more than he was ; *e. g.*, CHRIST, or Elias.

iii. It made him bold and fearless in his preaching ; he spoke to people's hearts, because he forgot himself, and did not try to be popular.

III. Consider the difference between S. John's greatness, and that of a baptized child, *"Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* (S. Matt., xi., 11.)

i. S. John's sanctity was less than ours in kind, not in degree. His was the climax of the Old Testament sanctity ; the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater by virtue of union with CHRIST through the Sacrament of Baptism.

ii. Here we see the necessity of sacramental union with CHRIST ; some say believe in CHRIST, faith is all you want, S. John's faith was perfect ; or follow the example of CHRIST's life, it is morality you need, S. John did this ; or that it is love, S. John proved his love by martyrdom ; and yet a baptized child is greater !

iii. But the source of our greatness must be the same, Humility, *"the least in the Kingdom of heaven,"* not those who think themselves great.

Affections.—Realize the need and privilege of being partakers of CHRIST through the Sacraments ; pray that you may ever be knit more close to Him through your Communions ; resolve to remove by penitence whatever sin you know may hinder this union.

S. PETER.

THE ROCK.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—S. Matt., xvi., 17-20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. Peter making his confession of our LORD'S Divinity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so confess CHRIST before men that He may confess you before His Father.

I. Consider S. Peter's Confession:

i. It was in answer to the question, “*Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?*” (v. 13). It was not merely an acknowledgment of our LORD'S Divinity, but of the relation between His two natures, *i. e.*, that He as the SON of MAN was the SON of GOD, “not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.”

ii. Others had partial views of Truth; Nathaniel had confessed Him as “*the Son of God*” (S. John, i., 49), but meaning no more than “Thou art the Messiah”; Nicodemus had acknowledged Him as “*a Teacher come from God*” (S. John, iii., 2); the common people were ready to believe in something supernatural about Him, when they said He was S. John Baptist risen from the dead, or Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the prophets (v. 14), and these had been, except S. John, types of Him.

iii. “*Blessed art Thou . . . for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father.*” The natural intellect, however great, cannot apprehend divine truth; it must be revealed by GOD. “*Non nobis, Domine,*” what have we that we have not received, our only merit that we have not refused the Gift.

II. Consider the words, “*Thou art Peter*”:

i. In Scripture the giving of a name implies covenant and character; *e. g.*, Abraham, Isaac, Israel, &c., and is accompanied by the gift which it signifies. S. Peter's name had been given when he was first called.—S. John, i., 42. He was now showing the gift of strength which it implied.

ii. By this name Peter, his incorporation with CHRIST is recognized, for “*THE ROCK*” was one of our LORD'S titles, and what JESUS CHRIST is of Himself that, in a far lower but still very true way, He has given to His chosen servants to be under Him.

iii. So in Baptism our Christian name is given, when we are made Members of CHRIST, partakers of His Nature, and enter into covenant with Him; here the name is given to Peter as a sign of our LORD'S covenant in regard to His Church, “*founded upon the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the Chief Corner Stone.*” (Eph., ii., 20.)

III. Consider our LORD's promise:

i. “*Upon this rock I will build My Church*”; *i. e.*, upon the Rock of S. Peter's Confession of the Incarnation of the SON of GOD.

ii. “*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*”; because founded on such a Rock, the Omnipotence of GOD.

iii. “*I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*”; the same power is promised to all the apostles—S. Matt., xviii., 18; they are all invested with it at the same time on the first Easter-Day—S. John, xx., 22-23; and the power is confirmed to them all by the Gift of the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost.

Affections.—Realize the dignity of the Christian privileges of Baptism; pray that you may use well its gifts; resolve during the Octave of S. Peter to use the Collect as a prayer for the Church.

S. JAMES.

THE CUP AND BAPTISM.

"She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy Kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."—S. Matt., xx., 21-24.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Salome with her two sons making this request.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for persevering courage in following CHRIST in the Way of the Cross.

I. Consider the request of Salome:

i. The request in itself was right, though founded on a misapprehension; for as we know that there are different degrees of glory in CHRIST's kingdom in heaven, we must strive for the highest, to aim at less is to risk losing all.

ii. Nearness to JESUS in His kingdom of glory in eternity must depend on our nearness to Him on the Cross now in time; fellowship in suffering here is the measure of our fellowship in glory there.

iii. Our places in heaven are predestined by the Father's love from all eternity, but we have to prepare ourselves for them now in time; they will be given only to those who are thus prepared for them, and for whom they are prepared.

II. Consider the conditions proposed by our LORD:

i. *"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?"* This carries us in thought to His Agony in Gethsemane when He prayed, *"if it be possible let this cup pass from Me."* (S. Matt., xxvi., 39.) With us it is the long struggle of life here, the effort to do our Father's Will, to drink our cup of sorrow.

ii. *"And to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with?"* The Baptism was that of Calvary, that death by which entrance to His kingdom in Paradise was gained; this Baptism of Blood must be ours too; for Adam by his sin left no other door by which we might escape from this world, no other return to Paradise.

iii. *"They say unto Him, we are able";* yes, for He gives us His grace that we may follow Him; He tells us, *"Without Me ye can do nothing"* (S. John, xv., 5); but S. Paul witnesses, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* (Phil., iv., 13.)

III. Consider the fulfilment of our LORD's promise, *"Ye shall,"* &c.:

i. S. John in his long life drank to the full the cup of the agony.

ii. S. James was the first of the Apostles to be baptized with the Baptism of Blood.

iii. They leave to us the rich legacy of their example; for our LORD says of all who enter His kingdom, that they must drink of His Cup and be baptized with His Baptism.

Affections.—Realize the need of agonizing ourselves to enter in at the strait gate; pray for more of the martyr spirit of S. James; resolve on some act of self-denial which you can do.

S. BARTHOLOMEW.

THE EYE OF GOD.

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."—S. John, i., 47-49.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Nathanael's astonishment at our LORD's words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may recollect God's Presence.

Nathanael and Bartholomew are probably the same person, the former being his proper name, used always by S. John, the other his patronymic, used always by the Synoptists.

I. Consider the mystical sense in the words, *"When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee"*:

i. *"Under the fig tree"* denotes man's state by nature, for it was with the leaves of the fig tree that our first parents clothed themselves after their sin.—Gen., iii., 7.

ii. The fig tree was the tree which our LORD cursed, because by its leaves it hid its barrenness.—S. Matt., xxi., 19.

iii. It was when man was hidden under the shadow of the tree of sin that JESUS saw him, and came to seek and to save him, and the lantern, by the light of which He sought and found him, was the Incarnation.

II. Consider the practical lesson, God's Omnicience:

i. *"I saw thee."* These words were spoken perhaps to counteract the adverse impression produced by S. Philip's inaccurate statement that JESUS was from Nazareth, and was the Son of Joseph, by giving a proof of His divinity; as such they were received by Nathanael, who replied, *"Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel"* (v. 49).

ii. What a check to sin this thought should be, that the Eye of God is gazing down upon me, and that every sin is committed in His very sight!

iii. What an incentive to sanctity the remembrance of that untiring Eye, watching us, seeing every desire for good that arises in our heart! What an encouragement in the hour of trial and temptation, that He sees and knows our difficulties, that He is no unsympathetic Spectator of our struggle!

III. Consider the especial virtue of Nathanael:

i. *"An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."* The sin of Jacob (Israel) had been guile in deceiving his father; Nathanael in this is his contrast.

ii. *"If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."* (S. Matt., vi., 22.) This light in Nathanael enabled him at once to recognize and confess CHRIST. *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* (S. Matt., v., 8.) Here we see the fulfillment of the Beatitude.

iii. *"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"* (v. 51). The further reward of guilelessness and purity, an ever-increasing Vision of CHRIST, until consummated in the Beatific Vision of eternity; a reference here to Jacob's Vision, the great type of the Incarnation.

Affections.—Realize that you are ever in God's sight; pray for purity of heart; resolve to make an especial effort to recollect God's Presence during the day.

S. MATTHEW.

THE RESULTS OF TRUE PENITENCE.

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of Custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples."—S. Matt., ix., 9-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD graciously sitting at meat in S. Matthew's house.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that by penitence you may prepare a home for Him in your soul.

I. Consider the dangers of S. Matthew's calling :

i. It was an engrossing work, demanding all his time, and for it he had practically given up his religion ; for a good Jew could not be a publican.

ii. It was a business in which there were special temptations to dishonesty, which in fact implied not only giving up his religious life, but taking up the laxest views of probity.

iii. It cut him off from the companionship of good people, and associated him almost entirely with men who were alike careless about religion and morality. How many men like S. Matthew choose callings in the world in which they can get rich only at the risk of their souls.

II. Consider the acts by which S. Matthew shows his penitence :

i. He obeys our LORD's command promptly and exactly.

ii. He breaks off from, and gives up entirely, all occasions of sin, though it involves an immense sacrifice, no less than wealth, business, companions, &c.

iii. He invites our LORD to his house, and makes a feast for Him ; these are the signs of a true repentance. How many like to think of our LORD as present when they go to Church, how few bring religion really into their home-life, and think of CHRIST as present even at their feasts.

III. Consider the feast at his house :

i. Our LORD at once accepts his invitation ; here we learn His gracious condescension ; no sooner has S. Matthew emptied himself of the riches of this world than he is filled with the riches of grace ; the world grudges too often to the penitent the favours our LORD so graciously and promptly bestows.

ii. *"Many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him."* Very few go to either heaven or hell alone ; the result of the penitence of one is almost sure to be the conversion of others. S. Matthew gives up his companions in sin, but first tries to bring them to CHRIST. Zeal for souls is one of the signs of true penitence, and who can speak so eloquently of the love of GOD as he who has experienced it in penitence.

iii. S. Matthew after the feast leaves all his worldly goods to follow CHRIST, and as a reward he becomes the Evangelist of CHRIST's kingdom ; for his Gospel, which speaks of the Blessing of the poor in spirit, is the one that speaks most of the kingdom of heaven, and especially sets forth our LORD's Office as King ; thus he is a commentary on the first Beatitude.

Affections.—Realize the dangers of the world ; pray for a spirit of obedient self-sacrifice ; resolve to try at least by intercession to lead some companion to CHRIST.

S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

THE WAR OF THE ANGELS.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."—Rev. xii., 7-10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the armies of heaven under S. Michael warring against the hosts of darkness.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may fight bravely against your enemy, Satan.

I. Consider the trial of the angels :

i. In God is all goodness, what is outside of Him must therefore contain a possibility of evil; before the Incarnation all creation was outside of God, hence the trial of the angels.

ii. They had never seen God, for in His Essence God is Invisible, and they were to wait in holy hope for God to manifest Himself to them, meanwhile, according to S. Bonaventure they became so dazzled by the contemplation of their own perfections that they worshipped themselves, according to S. Thomas Aquinas GOD revealed to them the purpose of the Incarnation, and they refused to worship the GOD-Man.

iii. The root of their sin in either case was pride, and it was against the virtue of hope ; for they chose present gratification instead of future beatitude ; (how like us;) one-third of them fell (v. 4).

II. Consider the war of the angels :

i. S. Michael raised the standard, signified by his name, “Who is like God?” Lucifer answered, “I will be like the most High.” (Isaiah, xiv., 14.)

ii. Lucifer and his angels were cast out of heaven on to this earth, and in their malice ruined it, and reduced it to the state described in Gen. i., 2, “wasteness and desolation.”

iii. Out of this chaos in the six days of the so-called creation GOD called forth the germs of good already existing in the earth, and prepared it for man’s habitation.

III. Consider that we are now carrying on this war :

i. Man was created to carry on the war which the holy angels had begun, to fight, and, in the Person of the Son of Man, to conquer and bind Satan, and to obtain the places in heaven, which the rebel angels had forfeited.

ii. To do this he must first be tried, hence our warfare has the twofold effect of preparing us, if we are faithful, for our places in heaven, and of overcoming and driving Satan from this earth.

iii. This conflict must last for us individually till our death ; for Satan till the number of the elect is made up ; the sign of its approaching end in either case is the increase of the fury of temptation, “the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (v. 12); so let us welcome the attacks of temptation as a sign of our own approaching victory.

Affections.—Realize your fellowship with the angels ; pray that you may be CHRIST’s faithful soldier and servant unto your life’s end ; resolve to say the Collect for S. Michael’s day for aid in your warfare.

S. LUKE.

PERSEVERANCE.

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me."—II. Tim., iv., 10-11.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the two aged saints alone in the prison at Rome.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of perseverance.

I. Consider the contrast between the Epistle and Gospel for S. Luke's Day :

i. The Gospel is an account of the sending forth of the seventy, among whom probably was S. Luke; this occurred in the third year of our LORD'S Ministry, and so very soon after S. Luke's Conversion, there we see him starting on the race of Christian life.

ii. The Epistle was written during S. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, shortly before his death, about A. D. 66, a lapse of thirty-six years between them.

iii. By a striking coincidence therefore, while the lesson here is faithful perseverance in running the race set before us, we see the beginning and ending of the course. S. Paul, not converted till some years later than S. Luke, becomes his fellow traveller and companion, and in the Epistle we see the two friends, both growing old, and nearing the end of their race. S. Paul, ready to be offered, having fought a good fight, and witnessing that of all who had been with him at different stages of the race only Luke was left;—some, like Demas, having gone back to the world, others, like Crescens and Titus, having been called away by GOD for other work.

II. Consider that we have all entered this race, and the great question is, Shall I persevere to the end? How many start, how few persevere! What are the principal obstacles to perseverance?

i. Not counting the cost at starting; meaning to do something for CHRIST, but not resolving to sacrifice everything for Him, if He demand it.

ii. Misapprehension of temptation; thinking that we are to be free from temptations after a little while, and not realizing that we are to fight with them till death; for that, so far from being a sign of weakness, they are the proof of strength; for GOD will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength.—I. Cor., x., 13.

iii. Irregularity in frequenting the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion and Confession, using the latter only in the beginning of the race.

iv. Want of realization,—of the unseen world (S. Luke's great characteristic was his fellowship with the unseen, especially with the angels),—that our great help and encouragement is that GOD, the angels, and the saints, are watching us and helping us, and as anxious that we should persevere as ever we can be.

v. The trial of loneliness, as S. Paul here, when those who began the race with us grow cold and go back like Demas, or priests who helped us are taken away from us by GOD's Call, like Crescens and Titus.

Affections.—Realize all these difficulties and resolve to face them bravely; pray for a spirit of greater recollectedness, that you may realize always the Presence of GOD; resolve to examine whether you are more advanced in spiritual life than you were a year ago, or at your Conversion.

SS. SIMON AND JUDE.

CHRISTIAN ZEAL.

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude, 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Blessed LORD with the scourge of small cords driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a spirit of holy zeal in God's service.

I. Consider Zeal as the special characteristic of SS. Simon and Jude:

i. Zeal is an essential to true religion, for it is the earnest desire for GOD's glory manifesting itself in action. It has thus been more or less a characteristic of all the saints, indeed of our LORD Himself, when He fulfilled the Scripture, *"The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up"* (S. John, ii., 17; Ps., lxix., 9); but it is especially brought before us by the saints we commemorate to-day, and of whose lives we know so little.

ii. S. Simon was called Zeolites, or the Canaanite, from belonging to the faction of the Zealots, who were conspicuous for their profession of extraordinary zeal for the law; and doubtless that same temperament made him zealous for the Gospel of CHRIST.

iii. S. Jude in the text exhorts all Christians earnestly to contend for the faith; *i. e.*, to be zealous, and indeed the word zeal seems stamped on his Epistle throughout.

II. Consider the dangers which attend Zeal:

i. Intolerance; the result of unrestrained, undisciplined zeal.

ii. Lukewarmness; the result of allowing zeal to flag.

iii. So zeal, while an essential virtue of religion, is an imperfect one, and needs to be guided and restrained by other Christian virtues.

III. Consider the safeguards of Zeal:

i. Faith; to direct its aim, and to point out the means it may use to attain its end.

ii. Charity; to restrain it from words or deeds of violence; the sons of Zebedee were called Boanerges on account of their zeal, and before it was disciplined they wished to call down fire from heaven to consume the village of the Samaritans that would not receive JESUS; but S. John became the Apostle of Love.

iii. Patience; to enable it to endure the many checks, to overcome the many obstacles it must meet in its work for CHRIST.

Affections.—Realize the need of zeal in God's service in the present day; pray for faith, love, and patience; resolve to do some act that may test your zeal for God's glory.

ALL SAINTS' EVE.

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb., xii., 1-3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Saints in Paradise, and the whole company of heaven, gazing upon our lives, as spectators did in the Coliseum at Rome.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may run with patience the race set before you.

The Beatitudes give us the laws and characteristics of sanctity, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the galaxy of the Old Testament heroes who anticipated those laws, and who, with the glorious company of the Christian Saints, form the stars of our spiritual firmament, and by the example of their lives give light to us in the dark night of this world.

I. Consider the imagery of the text.

i. Life is regarded as a great race course in which all are competing; this thought ennobles every life, however humble.

ii. The spectators are at once witnesses and examples; witnesses, for they watch with intense interest the issue of every life. Examples, for they themselves have been successful contestants in the same arena.

iii. The cloud is at once the emblem of protection and fertility; so the Saints not merely watch our efforts, but by their prayers help and refresh us, as rain does the thirsty earth.

II. Consider the result of the realization of this:

i. *"Let us lay aside"*; (a.) every weight, all the entanglements of life which hinder our advance, the love of the world, &c.; (b.) the sin which does so easily beset us, all sin, but especially that which we know to be the great source of weakness in our character.

ii. *"Run with patience"*; enduring the fatigue and discomfort of the struggle; sanctity is simply endurance; innocence is the soul untried, sanctity the soul which has endured.—S. James, i., 12.

iii. *"Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith"*; with eyes fixed on the Goal, with hearts set on the Prize, recollecting that *"He Which hath begun a good work in you will finish it."* (Phil., i., 6.)

III. Consider the Example of our LORD as the King of Saints:

i. *"Who for the joy that was set before Him"*; every sorrow has in it the element of future joy. *"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."* (Ps., cxxvi., 6.)

ii. *"Endured the Cross"*; here the great example of endurance, the great rebuke to our impatience.

iii. *"And is set down"*; here the reward which is offered to all who overcome, to all who endure.

Affections.—Realize that the eyes of heaven are on you, the hopes of heaven for you; pray for patient endurance; resolve to make a special effort to overcome your besetting sin.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOUL TOWARDS GOD.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—S. Matt., v., 3.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD promulgating the first law of His Kingdom.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true humility.

The Beatitudes give us the laws of sanctity arranged in most symmetrical order. We have only three possible relationships, towards GOD, ourself, and our neighbour. The first three Beatitudes give the passive side of our duty to each of these, and the fourth the result and test of its fulfilment; the next three give the active side, and the last the result and test of this.

I. Consider what poverty of spirit is:

i. It is not necessarily external poverty, for that is consistent with pride and covetousness, while this is the Beatitude of humility.

ii. It is self-knowledge, for it is the realization.

(a.) That we have nothing of our own; for we are but stewards, and every gift implies responsibility.

(b.) That the world around us is nothing; for it will all pass away.

(c.) That we are ten thousand talents in debt by our sins.

(d.) That the only possible possession of the soul is GOD, the only true riches those which will endure beyond the grave.

iii. It is the dethronement of sin and self, the emptying of the soul that it may be filled with GOD.

iv. It is the discovery of a new object in life, a turning from the creatures on account of their nothingness, and a directing of the soul to GOD.

II. Consider the reward, the kingdom of heaven:

i. The kingdom of heaven as opposed to the kingdom of this world, which the poor in spirit have surrendered; for the two can no more co-exist in a soul than light and darkness in the same place.

ii. The capacity for assimilating CHRIST's Kingdom depends upon this emptiness of soul as a condition.

iii. It is when the famine is in the land that Joseph's brethren seek the corn; when the Prodigal is starving that he comes to himself; it was those who were destitute of food and in the wilderness that our LORD fed with the five loaves and two fishes.

iv. The saints not merely practiced an exterior poverty, but realized the truth, that they were nothing, and had nothing, and, looking to GOD in Whom are all things, they possessed the kingdom of heaven.

Affections.—Realize the vanity of all things here; pray for heavenly-mindedness; resolve to examine what sin is occupying your heart, and to make a special effort to conquer it.

THE SECOND BEATITUDE.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOUL TOWARDS ITSELF.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”—S. Matt., v., 4.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying to S. Mary Magdalene, “*Woman, why weepest thou?*” (S. John, xx., 15.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may so mourn that you may be comforted.

As the first Beatitude puts the soul in its right attitude towards GOD, so this towards itself; the spirit of penitence must be the groundwork of all personal sanctity, the passive virtue corresponding to that active purity of heart, which enables the soul to see GOD.

I. Consider what the soul sees around it:

- i. One phenomena everywhere; for Sorrow is the King whose sceptre sooner or later touches every heart, a mystery of tears!
- ii. One universal fact the cause of this, Sin!
- iii. One common result, GOD dishonoured, man ruined!

II. Consider for what we have to mourn:

- i. For our own failures, that having such desires for GOD, that realizing so clearly our duty, that being so bountifully supplied with grace, we should fail so often! so sadly!
- ii. For our neighbour's sufferings, often for his inability to make those sufferings what they might be, remedial.

- iii. For a dying world, which in its blindness is so occupied in arraying itself in its grave-clothes that it allows that life which is within its grasp to escape.

III. Consider how we should mourn:

- i. Not in any spirit of bitter complaint, but in penitential sorrow for the cause of all suffering, sin.

- ii. *“I did mourn as a dove.”* (Isaiah, xxxviii., 14.) All penitence must be the work of the HOLY GHOST, the Dove; the spirit of penitence will enable us to bear our sorrows rightly, and will make them indeed a blessing to us.

IV. Consider the reward, “*They shall be comforted*”:

- i. It is the office of the Dove, the HOLY GHOST, to be the Comforter.
- ii. All true mourning makes us more like to the Man of Sorrows, and drives us to Him for consolation, and makes us partakers in the blessings of His Passion.

- iii. None are so strong as the truly penitent. One result of mourning is strength, and therefore power to help others, sympathy.

- iv. All sorrow has in it some element of future joy.—S. John, xvi., 20.

Affections.—Realize that if we are not comforted it is because we do not mourn aright; pray for a spirit of penitence; resolve to do some act of penitence as a reparation for the sins of others.

THE THIRD BEATITUDE.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOUL TOWARDS ITS FELLOW MAN.

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.”—S. Matt., v., 5.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying, “*Learn of Me; for I am Meek and Lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*” (S. Matt., xi., 29.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of Meekness.

The soul having learned from the two laws, which precede this, its true attitude to GOD and to itself, is now taught its relation to its fellow man. Meekness is that passive virtue, corresponding to, and forming a foundation for, those active works of mercy by which we fulfil our duty to our neighbour.

I. Consider what Meekness is:

i. There are many counterfeits of this virtue which have to be guarded against; *e. g.*, a false meekness which is either cowardice or sloth, the meekness of an easy disposition which does not want the trouble of asserting itself, the meekness of a weak character which yields to every influence, or that which neglects to show a holy indignation at sin.

ii. True meekness is the mark of a really strong character; for it implies the virtues of self-restraint, and moral courage. It has been especially exhibited by great men. The Bible says, “*Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth*” (Numb., xii., 3), and Moses towers in solitary grandeur as *the* man of his age, his besetting sin was anger, and one of the objects of the long wandering in the wilderness was to train Moses in meekness. What a trial for a man of his temperament that multitude of murmuring Israelites must have been!

iii. It is the realization of the rights of others, of their difficulties, and of the important fact that we are intended to be a discipline to each other; it is founded in love, and manifests itself in long suffering.

II. Consider the reward, “*They shall inherit the earth*”:

i. This seems so paradoxical; for the meek are just the ones whom we should expect to go to the wall, but history teaches us it is not so.

ii. All great leaders of men have been remarkable for their meekness. The two great founders of religions, Moses and CHRIST, they have possessed the land, *i. e.*, ruled it by the power of meekness.

iii. The meek possess the earth without strife, because, recognizing the rights of others, they respect them.

iv. They possess the earth of their own nature, rule their own wayward hearts by this virtue.

v. The remembrance of past sin must humble us, and the spirit of penitence will help us to be meek, and meekness will be our great safeguard against future falls.

Affections.—Realize the strength of meekness; pray for self-restraint; resolve to watch your conduct in regard to the person who particularly irritates you, and to practice meekness.

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE.

THE PASSION OF LIFE.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled."—S. Matt., v., 6.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying to His disciples, “*My meat is to do the Will of Him That sent Me.*” (S. John, iv., 34.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a greater desire for God’s glory.

This Beatitude is the connecting link between the passive and active virtues, the balance of the scales of sanctity.

I. Consider this virtue as the result and test of the preceding three :

i. The result of proper relationships between the organs of the body is health, and this is manifested by appetite for food ; so the proper fulfilment of the duties of the soul in its different relationships causes a great desire for God.

ii. Loss of appetite is a sign of disordered relationships ; so if we do not hunger after the things of God the cause is to be sought in some disturbed relation to God, oneself, or one’s neighbour, in pride, in anger, or imperfect penitence ; how often the latter !

iii. This Beatitude is therefore the test of the reality of the fulfilment of the preceding three, we cannot reach it except by the three steps of poverty, mourning, and meekness ; we can only pass through it by the active virtues of mercy, purity, and peacemaking.

II. Consider what hunger and thirst after Righteousness is :

i. Righteousness is the habitual practice of every virtue, and the accomplishment of all our duties ; it is perfection, *i. e.*, union with God ; in its highest sense it is CHRIST, “*the Lord our Righteousness.*” (Jer., xxiii., 6.)

ii. Hunger enables us to assimilate food to our bodies by which every part is nourished and strengthened ; spiritual hunger will lead us to feed on the Body of CHRIST by which our whole nature is nourished and strengthened ; it will lead us then to frequent the Sacraments.

iii. Thirst gratifies and refreshes, and in a lesser degree nourishes the body ; spiritual thirst we may take as a great desire for God’s glory, which should form the great object of our lives, refreshing them, and filling them with joy ; *e. g.*, our LORD’s thirst for souls on the Cross.

iv. This desire for perfection, this hunger and thirst after Righteousness, makes our spiritual life an object of intense and ever increasing interest, but without it how terrible is the vacancy ! but remember that it is the result of the fulfilment of the first three Beatitudes ; if we have it not, let us look for the fault in one of these.

III. Consider the reward, “*they shall be filled*” :

i. The result of the foundation law, the emptying of the soul, that there is room for God and virtue.

ii. Satisfied but not satiated, an ever increasing joy here, and the full consummation hereafter.

Affections.—Realize the need of making nothing less than perfection, your best, the end of your efforts ; pray for light to see where the hindrance to your spiritual growth lies ; resolve by earnest prayer and meditation to stir up more desire for your Communions.

THE FIFTH BEATITUDE.

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOURS.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."—S. Matt., v., 7.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying to those on His Right Hand, *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."* (S. Matt., xxv., 40.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of charity.

As soon as we have learned to long after CHRIST we shall strive to be like Him, hence the three following Beatitudes give us the active virtues of a CHRIST-LIKE life, and correspond inversely to the first three; mercy is the active side of meekness, the one the negative, the other the positive side of our duty to our neighbours. Mercy comes first, because it was the first manifestation of GOD to man.

I. Consider God's mercy to man:

i. Creation was an act of mercy; for it was the overflow of God's love upon the world.

ii. The Incarnation was the great act of God's mercy towards man.

iii. Our LORD's life on earth was essentially one of mercy.

II. Consider that mercy must have its foundation in love. *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"* (Lev., xix., 18):

i. How many love their neighbours far less than this!

ii. Some perhaps love their neighbours more; *i. e.*, when they neglect their prayers, meditations, &c., for active works of mercy for their neighbour. None but those of wonderful sanctity can afford to do this, and these make their work their prayer.

iii. Our LORD spent thirty years in Nazareth in the cultivation of His own soul before His three years' ministry of mercy, and even then did not allow His prayers to be crowded out.

III. Consider what mercy is:

i. There is a false mercy, which is really good nature or philanthropy, which has self as its beginning and often its end; thus good nature is quite compatible with hating some we dislike, while mercy is not; philanthropy is often only an outlet for energy, or self-assertion.

ii. True mercy is really the love of GOD, and therefore a recognition of our neighbour as objects of God's love.

iii. It manifests itself as in our LORD's life in active works of mercy both corporal and spiritual; without this love as its source all the corporal works of mercy are nothing worth, as S. Paul shows.—I. Cor., xiii.

IV. Consider the reward, *"They shall obtain mercy"*:

i. This is the law of God's dealings with man. *"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."* (S. Matt., vi., 2.)

ii. This is the ground of our LORD's judgment at the last. *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."* (S. Matt., xxv., 40.)

iii. How strict will be that judgment, when the greatest saint must ask for mercy, and the condition is that he should have been merciful!

Affections.—Realize how many opportunities you have of being merciful; pray that in your works of mercy you may be delivered from pride; resolve on some act of mercy you can do to-day.

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE.

OUR DUTY TO OURSELVES.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—S. Matt., v., 8.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the reflection of the sky in a clear, calm lake.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be more conformed to the likeness of CHRIST

The preceding Beatitude teaches us a CHRISTLIKE life towards the world around us, this towards the world within us; it is the active Beatitude corresponding to *"Blessed are they that mourn."*

I. Consider what purity of heart is:

i. This purity is not the negative purity of penitence (that is taught in the second Beatitude), but the active purity of a character which reflects the likeness of the SON of GOD.

ii. We are formed in GOD's image, but this image has been marred and distorted by the Fall, and as we cultivate each CHRISTLIKE attribute in ourselves we restore this image.

iii. The heart should be a mirror into which we may look and see reflected GOD's image.

II. Consider how this purity is to be cultivated:

i. By developing a CHRISTLIKE character; we cannot really see GOD, except in so far as we become godly. *"With the holy Thou shalt be Holy, and with a perfect man Thou shalt be Perfect. With the clean Thou shalt be Clean, and with the froward Thou shalt learn frowardness."* (Ps., xviii., 25-26.) We can only see GOD through the medium of our own character, hence the strange, distorted views some have of Him. We may have a theoretical belief in the perfection of GOD, but we only realize this in so far as we strive after perfection in ourselves.

ii. By exercising the faculties of spiritual perception through meditation; the ear catches the whispers of GOD's Voice and teaches the eye, till at last the eye gazes in contemplation on the glories of heaven.

III. Consider the reward of this purity, *"They shall see God"*:

i. This is not an arbitrary reward, but a necessary result of purity of heart.
ii. Now; in the works of nature, above all in man; in the exercises of devotion, especially in prayer, meditation, and Communion; and who can over-estimate the joy of this!

iii. Hereafter; the Beatific Vision, to *"see the King in His beauty."* (Is., xxxiii., 17.) Our beatitude then will depend upon our capacity, and that upon our purity of heart now.

Affections.—Realize the glories of CHRIST's Kingdom which are revealed to the pure in heart now; pray for perseverance in meditation; resolve to use the Collect for Purity in the Communion office for a certain time.

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE.

OUR DUTY TO GOD.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."—S. Matt., v., 9.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our LORD saying to the storm, "*Peace, be still.*" (S. Mark, iv., 39.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more zeal for God's glory.

Our LORD came into this world not only to show mercy to the suffering, and to cultivate one perfect soul, but to do His Father's work, to win the world to God, to end the war, to bestow upon weary man the gift of peace; so angels announced at Bethlehem, "*Peace, good will toward men*" (S. Luke, ii., 14), so when the strife was o'er, the battle won, our LORD appeared to His Apostles saying, "*Peace be unto you.*" (S. John, xx., 19.)

I. Consider what peace is:

- i. There is a false peace obtained by the surrender of every principle of right, but true peace is the result of war so on the battle field of Calvary our LORD won that peace, which was His Easter gift to His apostles.
- ii. It requires in this world continual preparation, and readiness for war in order to preserve it, until we enter on the eternal peace of the world to come.
- iii. We cannot be of any real help to others till we have won the victory over temptation ourselves, real sympathy comes from having suffered, but conquered.

II. Consider the work of the Peacemakers on earth:

- i. In its highest sense it is seen in the Ministry of Reconciliation, and is the work of the priest with penitent souls.
- ii. For the layman it is the work of Intercession for the conversion of sinners, especially the work of Eucharistic Intercession.
- iii. In a more general sense it is all Missionary work, every effort towards winning souls to GOD.

III. Consider the reward, "*they shall be called the children of God*:

- i. This work is the very office of the Only Begotten Son of GOD, His Title; for He is "*the Prince of Peace.*" (Isaiah, ix., 6.)
- ii. As partakers in this work they are sharers in His title, and are in an especial sense the *sons (víoī)* of God.
- iii. What joy hereafter to meet those we have helped here! it will indeed be to enter into the joy of our LORD!

Affections.—Realize the dignity of the work of a Peacemaker; pray for perseverance in struggle that you may win peace; resolve to devote a certain time to prayer for the conversion of sinners

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE.

THE BLESSING OF SUFFERING.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
S. Matt., v., 10.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John beholding the white-robed multitude in heaven, and hearing the Elder ask, *"What are these....and whence came they?"* (Rev., vii., 13.)

PRELUDE II.—Pray for patience in bearing suffering.

The seven Beatitudes, which we have considered, give us all the virtues of a saintly life, the eighth teaches their result here, and hereafter; as soon as we have become the children of GOD, by sharing in the work of the only Begotten SON, we must also share in His sufferings.

I. Consider what this persecution for righteousness' sake is:

- i. It is persecution for CHRIST's sake, for He is our Righteousness; it is no blessing pronounced on the mere endurance of suffering, unless it be for His sake.
- ii. The very persecution is a blessing; for, borne in reliance on the HOLY GHOST, it makes us more like our LORD.

iii. A CHRISTLIKE life must be a life of continual witnessing against the world, and the world will revenge itself, as it did on our LORD by persecution.

II. Consider the sources of persecution:

- i. The world; if we are resisting its temptations will bring suffering on us by isolation, ridicule, or poverty.
- ii. The flesh; with its appetites and weaknesses will rebel and inflict pain.
- iii. The devil; he will never cease to persecute till we are beyond his reach in Paradise.

III. Consider the reward, *"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven"*:

- i. That kingdom has but one key, the Cross of JESUS. We must suffer with Him, if we are to reign with Him.
- ii. Suffering is the one common feature in all the saints; S. John was told of the saints in heaven, *"These are they which came out of great tribulation."* (Rev., vii., 14.)

iii. A greater measure of the kingdom of heaven, inasmuch as suffering develops greater capacity in our souls for that kingdom.

Affections.—Realize the blessedness of suffering; pray for more love of the Cross; resolve to be more patient in your own special trial.

INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION FOR A RETREAT.

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee.”—Isaiah, xxvi., 20.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate S. John Baptist in the solitude of the wilderness communing with GOD.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be faithful and diligent in this Retreat.

I. Consider the authority under which you come into Retreat.

i. It has been in Retreat that GOD has given His greatest revelations to men ; *e. g.*, the law to Moses on Sinai, S. John Baptist in the wilderness, the Apostles at Pentecost, S. Paul in Arabia, S. John on Patmos.

ii. Each crisis of our LORD’s life was prepared for by a Retreat ; *e. g.*, Nazareth, the Temptation, the Election of Apostles, Death of S. John Baptist, Transfiguration, Wednesday in Holy Week.

iii. In making this Retreat I am then following the example of JESUS and the Saints.

II. Consider the purposes of a Retreat :

i. To withdraw your soul from the world that you may re-direct it to GOD.

ii. To think *out* some of the great questions of the soul, that you may be able to say “I have faced them”; if Retreats were needed in the past, how much more in the present day, when from our habits of life, from the hurry and bustle of the world, we rarely have time really to think a question out.

iii. To look back on the past, to learn from its failures, and to repent of its sins ; to look forward, and survey the way and work before you, and to prepare yourself for it.

III. Consider what GOD requires of you in this Retreat :

i. Recollection ; listening to GOD ; not only external, but interior silence.

ii. Docility of heart ; obedience to all suggestions of GOD ; be afraid of refusing anything to GOD. “*Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.*” (I. Sam., iii., 9.)

iii. Self-Examination, Real Meditation, and some definite resolutions for the future.

IV. Consider to help you :

i. GOD has called you in to this Retreat because He has something to say to you.

ii. The witnesses of your Retreat, GOD, the angels, the Saints, *and the devils.*

iii. It may be your last Retreat ; when next face to face with GOD ? at the tribunal of Judgment ; do not waste this opportunity.

Affections.—Realize that GOD has a revelation for you ; pray that you may hear, and obey His Voice ; resolve to be passive, like a block of marble in the Sculptor’s hands, that He may fashion you in the image of JESUS CHRIST.

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS OF VOLUME I.

FROM the other side of the Atlantic comes to us a book of singular beauty and value—the first volume of “*HELPS TO MEDITATION*,” with an Introduction by Bishop Seymour of Springfield—a book which will be found as valuable to clergymen, in supplying outlines of sermons, as to all clergy and laity, in providing hints, sketches and outlines of a course of daily meditation. As we turn from page to page, we are surprised that no book we know of has occupied the ground taken by this volume of Mr. Mortimer’s, which extends from Advent to Trinity. Though it has reached a second edition in the United States, it will be new, we imagine, to most English readers. No notice such as we can give can do justice to it. It is a very opportune addition to the helps to a spiritual life which we already possess. It will foster, in those who use it, the habit of meditation on the great truths of revelation and guide them in its practice. We hardly know any words in which we can better express our sense of the usefulness of these “*HELPS TO MEDITATION*.—*John Bull*.

TAKING it as a whole, the Rev. A. G. Mortimer’s “*HELPS to MEDITATION*” (Masters) is a very valuable book, and one which, with certain qualifications to be noted lower down, we cordially recommend. Each page (with one or two exceptions) contains a meditation, so that the whole of each exercise may be seen without turning over the leaf. The book is arranged so as to supply materials for every day in the year, and strictly follows the order of the Church’s seasons. The meditations are all introduced by brief portions of Holy Scripture, which are subsequently dealt with in a very thorough and thoughtful manner, while the personal application is generally telling and natural. Most people, we think, would find these meditations easy to use. Our first objection, however, is that they are much too long. To think one out fairly would take an hour—a far longer period than most people have time to give, or, if they had time, have the power of keeping the attention fixed. In practice it would be found that few persons possess the skill of contracting them in such wise as not to interfere materially with their general unity of purpose. But a far more serious objection to the book must be mentioned. In the meditation for the Monday after Septuagesima we read “The one business of life is to save your soul, and if this be neglected, all else is idleness.” This statement we positively deny, and we regard it with extreme abhorrence. It is Protestantism, pure and simple, and as mischievous in effect as it is false in principle. As well might it be said that the one business of life for a good son to attend to was so to behave to his father that a will might be made in his favour. A nice kind of son this would be ! albeit, his conduct to his parent might appear very exemplary. And, as Mr. Mortimer adds—“if this be neglected, all else is idleness.” In other words, it is mere waste of time to attend to your father’s business, or to his personal requirements, unless some advantage will accrue to yourself therefrom. This is a perfectly fair and just criticism, and we put it in this way to draw attention to a mischievous idea which is somewhat common amongst so-called “advanced” Churchpeople at the present day. Be it remembered, then, that “the one business of life” for a Christian is simply to try in all things to live to God’s glory. For that he was made, and to that he must devote himself. If he does this, he can perfectly well afford to leave his soul in God’s hands to take care of. There is surely selfishness

enough in the world, without our importing it into our religion. If Christians would think a good deal more of what they can give to God, and a good deal less of what they can get from Him, their spiritual vitality would be much stronger than it is now.—*Church Times*.

THIS is a valuable addition to our steadily increasing list of books which contain help for the difficult but most necessary practice of Meditation. It contains a full sketch of a Meditation for each day from Advent to Trinity, on some passage from the Sunday Services or connected with them. The part for Lent we especially commend. The Meditations for the Sundays in Lent are on the Gospels ; the Mondays, on subjects growing out of the former ; on Tuesdays, on the Actors of the Passion ; on Wednesdays, on the Seven Words from the Cross ; on Thursdays, on the Personal Types (rather an odd term) of the Holy Eucharist ; on Fridays, on some Aspects of the Cross ; and on Saturdays, on the Temptation. Throughout the subjects are well chosen and handled in an eminently reverent and practical manner. There is a slight defect in classification, in that under the term "affections" resolutions and prayers are included. It would have been clearer and psychologically more correct to have kept them separate, or to have included them under the heading "Exercise of the Will." The Bishop of Springfield's Preface will be found to contain a useful analysis of Meditation, very necessary for beginners.—*Literary Churchman*.

WE have received a Series of Meditations for every day in the Christian year, by the Rev. A. G. Mortimer, who is so well known in the Church for his abilities, and profound earnestness in parochial work, and in the conduct of Retreats. These Meditations are admirable. There is an utter absence of that haziness and indistinctness, which so often passes for mysticism. They are clear, positive, fresh, and wonderfully suggestive, and will make a clergyman feel like preaching. * * * * Practically, this is one of the most useful pieces of work yet done for the Church in this country, in promoting every-day devotion and piety, and study of God's Word. Our younger clergy can do no better than make a daily use of these Sketches, which answer all the purpose of sermon or lecture outlines.

* * * * They must be the result of years of study.—*Church Eclectic*, U. S. A.

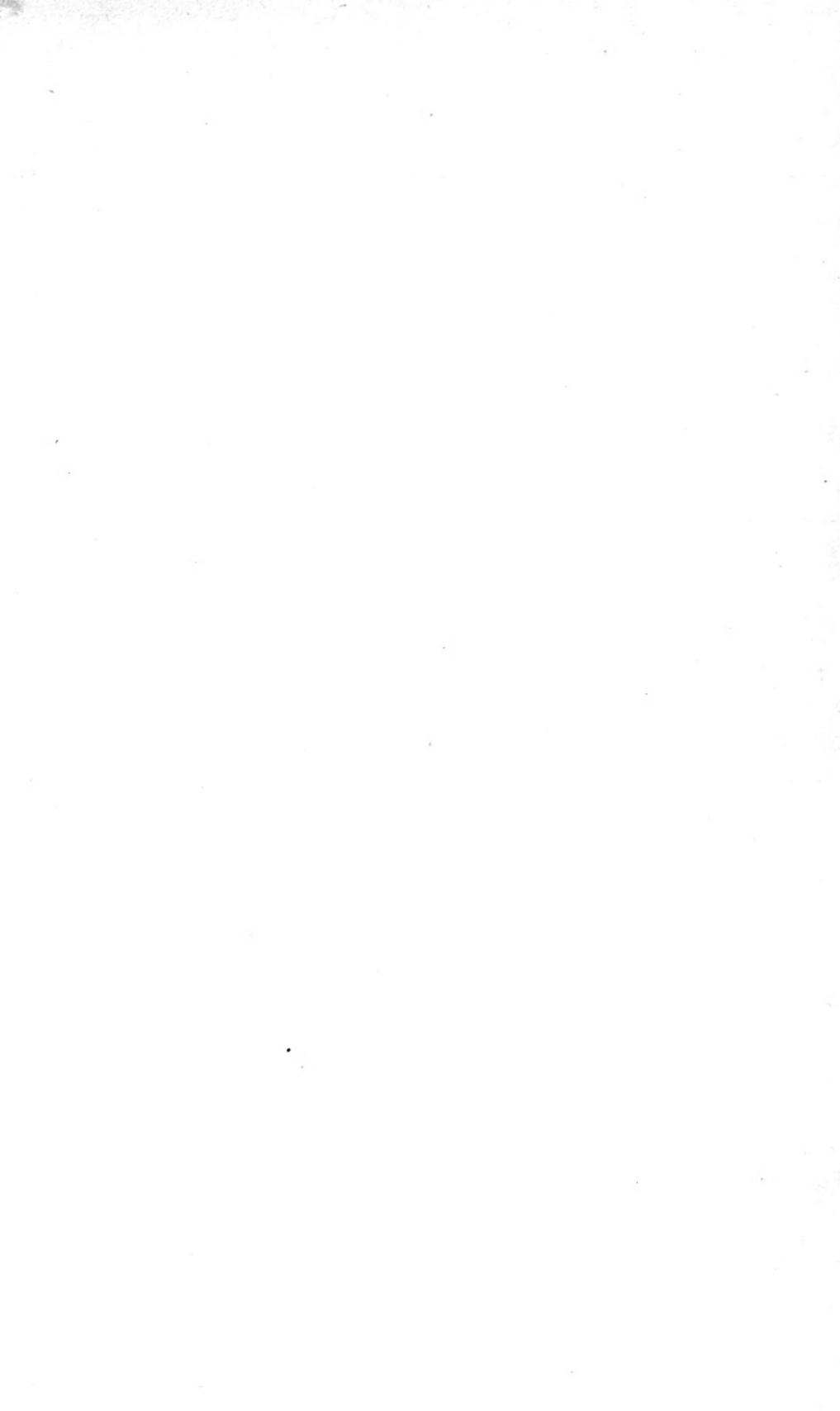
"HELPS TO MEDITATION," by the Rev. Alfred G. Mortimer, the second edition of which has appeared, will be a good book for Lenten reading. One great advantage which it has over some other books of a devotional kind lies in the fact that it brings reflections to a point, and does not permit the mind to remain in a state of vagueness.—*The Churchman*, U. S. A.

THE more that we see of these remarkable Sketches, or Skeletons, the more impressed we are with their great use, not only as what are properly termed "Meditations," but also as very suggestive hints to the clergy in preparing for the pulpit. While they are very full, they have plenty of margin for thought and study.—*Living Church*, U. S. A.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, ABERDEEN





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